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ABSTRACT

This document consists of all eight issues of the journal SKOLE published between 1988 and 1992. This journal contains original articles and reprints related to alternatives or innovations in education; critiques of other forms of education; theories of schooling, learning, and teaching; accounts of individual schools; and "how-to" articles. Major articles in these eight issues include: (1) "Traveling with Students" (Sandy Hurst); (2) "Children's Theater as Education" (Chris Mercogliano); (3) "Teaching Creative Drama in an Alternative School Setting" (Karen Stern); (4) "A New Look at Learning" (Daniel Greenburg); (5) "Tools Critical for the Success of Homeschooling" (Peter Ernest Haiman); (6) "Movement in Education: Part 2" (David Boadella); (7) "A Comparison of Home Schooling and Conventional Schooling: With a Focus on Learner Outcomes. Part III" (Brian D. Ray); (8) "Central Park East Secondary School Where Kids Are Found--And Not Lost!" (Deborah Meier); (9) "Central Park East: An Alternative Story" (Deborah Meier); (10) "Rebuilding: First Steps" (Theodore R. Sizer); (11) "To Live (And Thus Learn These Truths): Teaching The American Constitution" (Dave Lehman); (12) "Mom, How Do I Know I'm Awake" (children's philosophy) (Charlotte Landvoigt); (13) "An Education Money Can't Buy" (Gene Lehman); and (14) "Whaddya Mean, Free?" (philosophy of the free school movement) (Mary Leue); (15) "The Community School" (Emanuel Pariser); (16) "Coalition as Community" (Chris Mercogliano); (17) "Consumerism as a Deadly Art" (Charlene Liberata); (18) "Metropolitan School of Columbus - A Twenty Year Perspective on Alternative Schools" (Lucia Vorys); (19) Elements of the Holistic Education Vision"; (20) "The Difficulty of Building Coalitions in Holistic Education" (Ron Miller); (21) "The Free School: History of the Free School" (Mary Leue); (22) "From Gadfly to Mainstream: The New Orleans Free School Twenty Years Later" (Bob Ferris); (23) "An Experience in Froebel's Garden" (Elizabeth Cole); (24) "The Community School, Camden, Maine: Maine Alternative Gives Dropouts a Way Back" (Tom Verde); (25) "Kids, Democracy and Community" (Chris Mercogliano); (26) "Shared Spaces" (Betsy Mercogliano); (27) "Creativity" (Charlene Liberata); (28) "Peruvian Children" (Connie Frisbie-Houde); (29) "The Ecology of Childhood: A View of Summerhill School" (Mathtew Appleton); (30) "The Experience of Summerhill" (Albert Lamb); (31) "The Emergence of Arthur Morgan School" (Ernest Morgan); (32) "The Free School and the Planet School" (Keiko-san Yamashita); "How To Get an Education at Home" (Pat Farenga); "The Free School Community as Learning Resource for Conscious Living (Mary M. Leue). (KS)

ΣΚΟΛΕ

the journal of the
National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools

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SUMMER 1988

Vol. IV, No. 1

ΣΚΟΛΕ appears twice a year. It publishes articles related to the subject of alternatives or innovations in education, critiques of other forms of education, theoretical considerations associated with schools, schooling, learning and teaching, as well as accounts of individual schools themselves and "how-to" articles. We welcome manuscripts by educators, interested by-standers, parents and thoughtful children. Interesting photographs showing activities connected with learning/teaching are also welcome, but will not be returned except under very unusual circumstances.

Material to be submitted for publication must be received by the December 31 and June 31 deadlines. Manuscripts will not be returned unless extreme emotional blackmail has been practiced by the author, and should be typed with nice black type. Send your manuscripts to Mary Leue, 20 Elm St., Albany, NY 12202.

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ΣΚΟΛΕ

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National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools

SUMMER, 1988, VOL. IV, NO. 1

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ALBANY, NEW YORK 1988

EDITORIAL COMMENT

This is our first properly printed issue, and ain't we proud? Isn't it bee-you-tiful? I feel like a new grandma. Hope you enjoy it. Actually, I think you will also find it to be a very useful one to keep as a reference source; so, even if you don't read it all cover to cover as soon as you get it, do please hang onto it. There's a lot of "beef" in here.

We have *five* original articles this time. Sandy Hurst's marvelous compilation on how to travel with kids is an absolute MUST! Even if you eventually lose this volume of the journal, I can always send you a reprint of it (or of any of them, for that matter), because Sandy really has covered all bases, and after reading it, you may want to make traveling a regular part of your school experience so do please assimilate her wisdom and foresight. It may save you a lot of grief.

Chris Mercogliano's and Karen Stern's articles on children's theater as education both focus appropriately on their own experiences in doing it. Karen has added a foreword and afterword which tell us a lot about her way of struggling with and learning from her role as a drama teacher - and potentially our as teachers in alternative schools - in noticing how everything that happens is grist for the mill! Chris,' you might say takes this principle a step further into the process and, like Sylvia Ashton Warner, to whom he refers, allows himself - and us - to see into the inner workings of the dramatic process as "magic theater," in Hermann Hesse's term (*Steppenwolf*), as he saw them in reflection upon the process of individuation.

Dan Greenberg has given us another of his insightful analyses of what "education" is and is not, and is right on the beam, for my money! Dan, if only you could listen to other alternative school people as well as you speak from your own school experience! It is so intensely poignant and equally frustrating to me to realize how much we value Dan's wisdom and experience when he is projecting so much ignorance, hypocrisy, benightedness and downright harmfulness onto all the other alternative schools except his! And of course no one - not Sandy's mild protest (see the Letters section) nor Jon Greenbaum's (see the NCACS Newsletter for a while ago, perhaps last fall) impassioned outburst against Dan for bad-mouthing "the left" - no, nor even Dave Lehman's balanced and objective review of the pedagogical inconsistencies - the absurdities - inherent in Dan's position taken literally (*SKOLE*, Winter, 1987) are likely to move him

off that well-entrenched position, or so I fear. Well, maybe next year. But please, everybody, read his article!

Every human perspective or "way" has both a positive and a negative force built into it, and, like alternative education, homeschooling has its own. Peter Haiman's article on homeschooling, like Brian Ray's, the concluding part of which is also included in this issue, comes out of an academic perspective. To my mind, truly understanding the theoretical underpinnings of alternative education *or* homeschooling is as essential in coming to full awareness of our job as are our personal experiences of "doing" it. "We learn to do by doing," said John Dewey. But thinking, formulating, analyzing, reflecting, extrapolating, synthesizing - all of those cognitive-perceptual functions we perform *upon* what we do are essential if we are not to fall prey to the danger of the mindlessness, of just doing but not thinking adverbially - not taking account of the where, why, how, whether, and whither of the doing. Peter's article offers good advice for homeschooling parents who need or are looking for this kind of backup for their work with their kids. Peter brings out a point about alternative people which really needs to be addressed by all of us within alternative education - the importance of objective assessment of the issue of competence. His suggestions should prove helpful in this endeavor.

Perhaps one might even venture a generalization about non-standard institutions like alternative and home schools - which applies equally to the growing alternative medical practices of midwifery, home birth, naturopathy, homeopathy, and probably a lot of others! And that is: taking "the road less traveled," has tremendous rewards for people courageous enough to embark on such self-directed learning. But there is a caveat here too. Simply having leeway and experiencing the satisfactions of not being governed "from above" carries its own built-in dangers, among which is the danger of non-reflection, non-objectivity toward one's "baby" which can occur in any unmonitored institution under the sway of our all-too prevalent human vanity, ignorance or greed! See Mary Sweeney's editorial on the subject in *Holistic Education Review* for summer 1988. Ther term *superiority* which she reports as ascribed to alternative educators by Mary Anne Raywid needs to be taken seriously - and this sometimes applies to homeschooling parents as well.

There is also the issue of damage to the group by the idiocies of the few as seen from "outside." Like beauty, excellence or its opposite is often in the eye of the beholder. No one in the

establishment seems to think to compare the ratio of successful outcomes versus failures in the two systems, conventional and alternative, although Brian Ray's paper makes a very good start, in examining the evidence so far gathered. But the reputation imposed on us all as reported by Herb Kohl that alternative education has not had particularly good results may have been at least party influenced by the "flakiness" of a few kooks (not Herb, I hasten to add!). Such a danger is always lurking for alternative practitioners. The damage suffered by the entire growing midwifery profession, for example, when a midwife loses a baby is true, in lesser degree, of all alternative callings. And although the built-in dangers in education may not be either as salient or as disastrous as those implicit in the birth process, wanting the freedom without equally understanding the responsibility - the ability to be truly sensitive to "the lives of children" which George Dennison understood so well and about which he spoke so eloquently is - must be - a high priority item for us in our schools!

The second and concluding part of David Boadella's article on movement in education speaks eloquently to the issue of what kinds of concerns really need to be addressed in looking at children's learning processes, what you might call the nitty gritty of learning as embodiment of experience. The reprint by Leslie Hart on brain research as applied to learning which Mabel Dennison sent on dwells lucidly upon the findings that could, but don't, undergird the entire learning process, and the folly of the false assumptions that do!

The newspaper clipping on Herb Kohl addresses both the intra- and the inter-institutional dimensions of alternative education. We get a vivid glimpse (as those of us who attended the NCACS conference at The Farm got directly from Herb himself) of Herb's style with kids, his philosophy of learning and a look at his relationship to the Establishment - the full spectrum.

We have two reviews - an informative and enthusiastic overview by Betsy Mercogliano of a handful of alternative publications, including Ron Miller's and Mary Sweeney's new periodical, *Holistic Education Review*. This month the latter has a whole section about alternative education, and Jerry Mintz, Dave Lehman and I all have articles in it. It's a fine issue. The other review, taken from *The Nation*, is of two books spelling out the data *of* and offering remedies *to* the deplorable state of secondary education, particularly of various minorities. It fits very well into what Herb Kohl is saying to us.

Gene Lehman's *LUNO* comments never fail to touch me with their deep caring about the quality of children's experiences, and his generosity in sharing them impels me to do the same. Hope you get from them the kinds of feelings I do.

So that's the ballgame. I'd love to hear comments from you, and please remember how important your articles, poems, pictures, stories are to our journal.

TRAVELING WITH STUDENTS

by Sandy Hurst*

Let it be clear from the beginning of this article that everyone has a different style of traveling and of working with students while on a trip. This is a description of one school's style, and the styles of several of the adults who lead that school's trips.

During the second year of Upattinas School, while the group of students from twelve through fourteen were studying space exploration, the question arose of whether it would be possible to actually see the launching of the final Apollo mission from Florida. None of us had ever traveled with more than our own families, nor had we yet bought a school van in which to go. At the time we had a teacher, J, who drove a Blazer, and a mother who was willing to take the time, so off they went with five students to Florida. They took rag-tag tents and sleeping bags, borrowed cooking equipment and as few dollars as they thought they could get away with, and they came back with many stories and wonderful pictures.

Many years and many miles since then, we have learned a great deal about traveling with groups of people, not necessarily just teen-agers. One of the most important things that stays with us is that you can do it! It is possible to cross the United States, indeed to leave the country, on just about the same amount of money per person that most families spend on their children when they're at home. And given adults who have lots of dedication and sense of humor, you can enjoy it.

Our trips have ranged to Nova Scotia, Minnesota's Boundary Waters, the Great Smoky Mountains, the Everglades, Baja Mexico and across the Mexican mainland, California, and throughout the Southwest. We have visited many of the major national parks and cities around the United States, and we find that we especially enjoy a mix of cultural and natural experiences.

In planning for a long adventure, it is important for the leaders to establish the style of the trip with the students interested in

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participating. In a democratic society like ours, students expect to be consulted and to help with all aspects of planning, but it is also important that they know that the final responsibility for their welfare lies with the adults and that the adults on the trip take this responsibility very seriously. Thus, we establish what we call ground rules very early in the planning. These ground rules reflect the comfort level of the adults leading the trip as to safety, health of participants, general conduct while on the road and at the various stops, etc.

One of the most important considerations for adults leading trips is that of safety. At least one of the leaders should have training in basic First Aid and CPR. The leaders must feel confident in their decisions about driving speed, time behind the wheel, and any decision making which may be needed during hiking or other outdoor excursions. Decisions about such matters may include consultation with the group, but the final responsibility must lie with a leader who is willing to take on the consequences. Our experience tells us that all-night driving is rarely indicated unless there are extra drivers. It leads to irritability and inter-personal problems as well as being a safety hazard. It is also important to talk about and work with the tolerance limits of drivers as to noise level in the bus or van. Some people don't mind loud music, but for others it is a drain on nerves and concentration. This is an area for group discussion and decision-making, but one must assume that the group will consider the driver or that the driver must set the rules. There can be no compromise when actual safety is at stake.

Another area where safety is of the utmost concern is that of adventure experiences such as back-packing, caving, climbing, canoeing, and rafting. Only people who have experience with these skills should make decisions about weather, general conditions, and the condition or ability of any member of the group. Preparation is of the utmost importance in these areas. A group does not need to prepare before leaving home, but there needs to be practice sessions and short trial runs built into the over-all planning of a trip so that every member of the group can develop the necessary skills and stamina to have a successful experience. One time on a school trip, we took along a girl who was anorexic. We did not know it before the trip, so a decision had to be made during the trip about whether to allow her to continue. We had planned a back-packing hike and the leaders determined that it would be unsafe for her to hike with gear

unless she would show that she could and would eat for several days before the hike. We felt that it would also have been an unpleasant experience for the other students. We told her about our decision and offered to call her parents and send her home before the hike. She elected to stay with us and to eat. Obviously, this was an unusual case, but it is an example of the kind of decision-making leaders need to be prepared to do. Needless to say, we were very angry that her parents did not let us know about her condition - for which, we later discovered, she was being treated before we left. This points up the importance of knowing as much as possible about each trip participant - health history, allergies, mental health, etc. It also points up the importance of having along parental permission slips allowing students to be treated medically, and emergency contact information for the families of each student.

Trips to cities where students are not familiar pose other sorts of safety considerations. Early in our years of traveling with students, we went to San Francisco. Everyone was sure that he or she could find bus and trolley routes and the kids prevailed upon the adults to allow them some time on their own. Luckily, when given their freedom, it turned out that most of them were too timid to actually use it, and they stayed with the adults or the two students who had been there before. In retrospect, I would advise leaders not to allow high schoolers free rein in major cities. Certainly there are areas where they can be safe, and with good rapport and trust established ahead of time, some free time is important and valuable. But it is also important that the adults know about the area of the city and set careful limits on time and perameters.

One of the most valuable and fun experiences in the city is that of learning to use the transit system. Teach the students how to read the instructions, maps, codes, etc. Give them time to try their skills on bus, subways, and trains. Plan excursions on public transportation into your trip even when you have your own vans. You can learn a great deal about a city by riding the bus from one end of its run to another. Help the students to see all the variety of architecture, neighborhoods, stores, and people. This is especially important for people who come from small towns and the country. Teach them, also, how to use the agencies of the city if they should get lost or find themselves in any kind of trouble. These are survival tools which all of us should have.

Along with safety come health considerations. Any group traveling for an extended period of time must work at staying healthy. That means, at the very least, very clean practices when it comes to

food handling and dishes. It's amazing how many teenagers don't know how to wash dishes for maximum cleanliness. We periodically collect dishes and sterilize them in order to keep contagious conditions at bay. We also stop once every week to wash clothes - which also takes some care for some students who may have never washed their own clothes before. We took such a student on one trip. His mother had bought him an expensive Damart undershirt and he put it into the hot dryer. It came out looking like a baby's shirt. Luckily he was a good sport, because he took a lot of ribbing about it for the rest of the trip.

Keeping one's body clean is rarely a problem for teenagers these days until they find that they cannot take a shower every day. Again, it's a matter of experience, and once they find out that you can stay clean by washing one part at a time, they are infinitely adaptable. This brings up a problem which different people solve differently. We are very ecologically minded. For this reason we do not allow bathing with soap, even biodegradable soap, in streams or lakes. We bring pots or basins of water from the stream, but let the soapy water run down into the ground (not directly under a plant or tree). Even biodegradable soaps cause pollution in streams, and it's not very reassuring when you are standing by a stream and soap bubbles come floating by. There are some times when there is just not enough water for every day bathing by a large group. When we were in Baja California (which is really in Mexico), we were surrounded by salt water, but fresh water was scarce and we could not carry enough for everyone to have unlimited quantities. So - the students learned to wear their hair in braids and to tie bandannas over it to help it stay clean for longer. We would take turns using the rinse water from the dishes for the first wash, rinsing the soap out with sea water, and only rinsing once with fresh water. It wasn't the most comfortable way to wash one's hair, but it did the job for the two weeks we were there. This kind of experience has incredible side effects. It not only helps people to see how much we really waste in our society, but it gives them insight into their own fortitude and flexibility, into the reality of life in other countries and communities, and some real problem solving situations.

And, what about toileting? We had a really funny episode on that trip to Baja. We had invited a young man from the village near where we were camping to spend an evening with us. He spoke almost no English and my halting Spanish did not include the words he was using. Finally, with the help of my trusty dictionary, he made it

clear that what he wanted to know was "How do you urinate?" So we got out our shovel and roll of toilet paper and showed him how we dig a hole, do the job, and burn the paper before we cover the hole. Again, this seems to be just too awful to many people until they find out that it is, perhaps, even a better way to get rid of bodily waste. On our trip to the Canyonlands the students even found themselves decorating their spots! If you're going to another country, it's a good idea to find out beforehand how one asks for public bathrooms. In most countries you can just use the word toilet, but in parts of Mexico and other Central American countries, there are no toilets and one has to learn the local way to express this need. On our trip we used "el escusado", which means "the place to which you excuse yourself."

When it comes to treating illness or injury, we follow our First Aid training and our instincts and experience. We always carry along a supply of anti-diarrhea and upset stomach medicine recommended by a doctor. We also carry antibiotics and antihistamines in case of infection or reaction to stings. And, when we are on a trip involving back-packing or other such adventure activities, we carry several pain pills and the proper equipment to stabilize broken bones. We have been very lucky not to ever have had to cope with anything more serious than one person who ran a high fever and had a strep throat in Mexico. We took him to the local emergency room and were on our way in no time. We have had many episodes of colds and sore throats, and stomach upsets. These just run their course with the usual treatments used at home. One very important thing to keep in mind is to remind everyone to drink plenty of fluids and eat the kind of foods which contribute to keeping the stomach and bowels healthy. This is often a necessary part of the teaching about the trip and can be brought into meal planning and cooking.

That brings us to meals. We are consistently able to provide good tasting, well balanced meals, for about $3.50 per person per day. That does not include meat at every meal, but this is another learning experience for the participants. The variety of sandwiches we create by the time we are on the way home is endless. Usually, we leave school well stocked with staple foods and those we can carry without too much refrigeration because we get a discount for volume buying from our local super market. We carry two picnic coolers and two large wooden boxes as well as two smaller boxes for lunch and snack foods. We guarantee healthy food and snacks, but the trip money does not buy soda or candy.

One of the favorite foods on our hiking and camping trips is beef jerky which we make ourselves before we leave. We also mix our own trail mix and pancake mix and package our back-packing foods ourselves. We use a variety of dry vegetables, noodles, hard cheeses, parmesan cheese, pepperoni, soup mixes, and our own mix of peanut butter fudge. For these trips we carry water purification tablets and allow no one to drink from streams, no matter how remote they are. The prevalence of ghiardia in even the farthest reaches of the mountains makes this imperative. We boil any water we use for cooking for several minutes, and we fill canteens with any left-over boiled water. A tiny bit of lemon juice in the canteen helps to mask the flavor of treated water.

When we are traveling on the road and in non-primitive camps, we carry Coleman type stoves and cook in much the same way we do at home, but with usually only two hot dishes. We try to have many green salads and lots of fruits available. We use lots of grains and cheese. When a trip is going to be out for a month, hot dogs and hamburgers get old fast. Our students have a lot of fun concocting new recipes with simple foods. One of our favorite campground meals is Navajo Tacos - Indian fry bread with refried beans, cheese, sauce, and tomatoes and lettuce all piled on top. We also find stir-fried vegetables and rice popular, as is beef stew made with canned meat and vegetables so that it doesn't take so long to cook.

This kind of travel and every day planning can become very tiring for everyone sometimes. On the days when we're all feeling used up and stressed we try to find a small restaurant which will give us a good price for breakfast or dinner. Sometimes we stop at whatever fast food service is available. In order to avoid the inevitable argument over which fast food is better, we try to find a strip and give out the appropriate amount of money for each person to use wherever they want.

Where to stay seems to be the next big consideration. Upattinas trips are camping trips, and as such, are set up to use the out-of-doors as sleeping space. We travel on long trips during the times of the year when the temperature does not go below about fifteen degrees. Shorter, more specialized trips may be actually winter camping trips. Most of our camping is done in state and national parks, preferably national parks because they are not as expensive. We have found, however, that you are much more likely to find hot showers at state parks, so we try to strike a balance. We use maps and standard camp ground listings to find the sites nearest to our stopping

place for the night. Occasionally we use youth hostels, but they are much more expensive per person. Only twice have we used motels - both times when we were traveling in extremely severe weather and felt that we could not out-run the storm. In such cases you can almost alway find a kind manager who will give a special price and let the people double up in the rooms.

Sometimes, no matter how well you plan, you find yourselves needing to stop and rest and with no place to go. On such occasions we have been known to use roadside rest stops, (not legal in some states, so beware), a farmer's field (always with permission if he can be found), or just the off-the-road countryside where we find ourselves. In such instances we stay clustered together so that we can move if we have to. We do not use our vans for sleeping except in the most impossible situations because of the need for people to separate from each other as well as because of the extra wear it causes to the inside of the vans.

Equipment for individual members of our trips must be able to be packed into a back-pack and a day pack. Each person may have two bags only, so that we have room in the vans for the other equipment and the people. We give everyone a basic list of necessary items and make sure that they each have each item before we leave. Our list has served us well for many years, so I am including it here for reference. You will note that we ask them to bring two bandannas. That is because we do not carry and use the quantities of paper towels you would need for wiping up dishes, spills, etc. Each person learns to use a bandanna for all kinds of clean-up jobs.

Sample personal equipment list:
Light weight sleeping bag good to 15 degrees
Plastic ground cloth
Sleeping pad (not a heavy air mattress)
Back pack lined with plastic garbage bags
Day pack or bag (no paper or light plastic)
Back packer tent or tarp (if you have one)
2 Bandannas
Flashlight & extra batteries
Eating utensils and dishes (one bowl, cup & spoon will do)
Pocket knife (no hunting or other larger knives)
Water bottle (canteen or plastic bottle)
Suntan lotion

Baseball or other visor cap for shade
Wool cap and gloves
Rain gear and jacket
Clothing for one week including plenty of socks, sturdy long pants, shorts, bathing suit, cotton and wool shirts and a wool sweater.
Solid hiking boots and sneakers
Notebook and pen

One of the most important boxes to go on a Upattinas School trip is the library box. In it are books for all sorts of identification, first aid, cook books, and story books. We often spend evenings reading to each other from books by the great naturalists or story tellers. We share Indian lore and ghost stories and poetry and anything anyone brings to enjoy. Each student brings a book to read while traveling, a notebook and pen. Each day we set aside a writing time and often we share what we write. We sing, too. Sometimes we surprise ourselves with how many songs we learn while on a trip.

In planning for our trips, we usually give out what we call a "Poop Sheet" about a month before we leave. This includes available general information and equipment list, cost, dates, and style of trip. About a week before we leave we give every family an itinerary which includes contact phone numbers and addresses and instructions about getting emergency information to us by way of local police or park rangers. We also require a permission slip allowing the student to travel with us and to be treated medically should the necessity arise. It helps to have the parent's health plan and number on that slip.

As you read through all of this, you may wonder how you could ever organize and live through an extended trip with students. Take heart - after many years and many trips, it has become almost second nature to me. My pack stays partially packed, my doctor expects to call for prescriptions to freshen our first aid supply, our grocery store says "Where are you going this year?" And the girls at the bank are glad not to have to count my endless deposits of dollars raised at lunches, cake sales, and such for a while. Even some of the students are able to estimate how much oatmeal we'll use and how many cases of tuna before everyone hates it.

Perhaps the most rewarding outcome of this kind of trip is the closeness we gain by being together through so many different conditions and sharing each others' good times and bad. It is inevitable over a month's time that everyone, including the adults, will have bad moods, be lonely for loved ones, not feel really well. But

everyone will also have times of joy and feelings of boundless good health and love, and those times seem to override the difficult times. At about the tenth day you'll find that homesickness and irritability are king. But that passes in a day or two and the next two weeks are like magic in the group. At least that's the way I've experienced it through at least eleven of these trips. What a rich way to share in the search for community and caring - as well as to learn about our world first hand!

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(215) 458-5138

Dear Parents,
The Upattinas School Spring Trip will be spending a part of its time in Mexico, and for this reason, we must have written permission from you for your child to go to Mexico with the school. Please sign and return this letter before Feb. 16, 1987.
I,_____give permission for my son/daughter,_____ to travel with Upattinas School in Mexico during April, 1987. I also give permission for the trip leaders to have my child treated medically, should the need arise.

_____
Signature of parent or guardian

MEXICO TRIP - ITINERARY

Itineraries for big trips are, at best, approximate. We follow them in general and our days can be traced in a general way, but we do change our minds due to weather, condition of vans, condition of people, etc.

March 30, 1987	Leave school in the A.M. heading for Clayton Lake State Park near Radford, VA via I 81 & 59
March 31	DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, AL I 59
April 1	Environs - Lafayette, LA I 10

April 2	Goose Island, near Corpus Christi, TX
April 3	Brownsville, TX. We'll cross the border here and try to camp near Santa Teresa, Mexico
April 4	La Pesca, Mexico
April 5	Naranjos, Mexico
April 6-10	Exploring Mexico City and its environs
April 11-13	Michoacan, village of Uruapan - hiking and camping in Pico de Tancitaro and Barranca de Cupatitzio
April 14	Guadalajara - shopping and provisioning
April 16-17	Coastal area south of Mazatlan
April 17	Los Mochis
April 18-19	Hermosillo Pincate National Park
April 20	Through Organ Pipe Cactus National Park to Painted Rocks State Park on I 8 in Arizona
April 21	San Diego Area
April 22-25	NCACS Conference - Escondido, CA
April 26	Phoenix, AZ - Karen's back yard
April 27	Cibolo National Forest near Socorro NM
April 28	Ute Lake State Park, Tucumcari, NM I-40
April 29	Norman or Fountainhead State Park, E. of Okla. City

April 30	Between Ft. Smith and Memphis - Russellville, S.P.
May 1	The Farm - south of Nashville TN off U.S. 64
May 2	Carter Caves State Park, E. of Lexington on I 65
May 3	Home

We will pick up mail at these places:

General Delivery
Brownsville, TX 78520

c/o John Boston

Box 92, NCACS Conference
Escondido, CA 92025

c/o Karen Stern
934 S. Maple Ave.
Tempe, AZ 85281

The students will call home as often as possible (or appropriate) in the States, but calling from Mexico is very difficult in some places, so don't be alarmed if calling from there is less often. It is in the nature of our trips that we are often away from areas where there are amenities.

Should you need to contact us in an emergency, contact the police in the area where we are scheduled to be and ask for their help.

Please feel free to call Sandy over the weekend if you have any questions.

We will do laundry along the way and it is possible that we will have to change plans. If we do, we'll let you know through the phone chain or individual calls.

Parents should know: It is the policy of our trips that the leaders take full responsibility for the health and well being of the students. But - we cannot patrol sleeping arrangements because of our need for sleep and alertness during the day. Please counsel your son or daughter according to your family's customs should she/he have a boyfriend or girlfriend going on the trip. We'll be driving a tan Plymouth Van lic. #DTP 736 PA and a dark blue Ford Van lic. #LNL 554

1987 ICE BREAKER TRIP

Time is rapidly approaching for the annual Upattinas Ice Breaker Trip - a time to break the ice of hesitations and reservations that distract us from unity and plunge into a new school year with hope and good feeling. Again this year we will be traveling to Hickory Run State Park, which is about two and one half hours to the Northeast. We will depart from Upattinas early Monday morning on Sept. 28 and return in time for the school buses on Friday, Oct. 2.

This is a great time of the year to be outdoors. We will hike along hemlock bordered streams and see beautiful waterfalls, munching on teaberry leaves and wild blueberries as we go. We will visit one of the most striking geological features in Pennsylvania - a boulder field that is several acres large. And, of course, there will be lots of time for hot volleyball competition. All of the staff and students will be going on the trip and we would like to extend an invitation to parents to join us. There's plenty of room and the facilities available to us include cabins, showers, and a large dining hall.

WHAT TO BRING:

Clothes suitable for temperature fluctuations (days can be very warm and nights chilly)
Raincoat,
Flashlight
Sleeping bag and pad (there are bed frames, but no mattresses)
Towel and toilet items
Plate, cup and eating utensils
Swimsuit
A large lunch
PLEASE PACK INTO A STRONG BAG SUCH AS A GYM DUFFLE NO PLASTIC BAGS!!
Cost: $30.00 for adults and high schoolers
$20.00 for lower schoolers and younger home schoolers
Hickory Run State Park is close to Split Rock Lodge in the Poconos.
R.D. 1, Bx. 81, White Haven, PA 18661
Phone #717-443-9991

Please do not load your child with junk food. We will have plenty of snack food with us.

All money must be in by Thursday, September 24 so that we can shop. If money is a problem for you, please call Sandy. We may be able to help by finding jobs for your child to do to earn some of it. Don't let money be the reason a student does not go on the trip.
Everyone is expected to go on this trip. It is very important.

ICE BREAKER TRIP EXTENSION:

Some High School students will continue on from Hickory Run to the Northeast Regional Conference of the NCACS. These people will need camping equipment, as they will be spending the following week doing Shore Ecology on the coast of Maine.

Cost: $25.00 for the conference and transportation
$20.00 for expenses during the following week.

Basics to Bring:
Tent (if you have one) with tarp
Sleeping bag, pad and ground cloth
Plenty of clothes which can layer
Flashlight
Two pairs of sneakers or shoes
Rain gear
Eating utensils
Toilet articles, towel, etc.

All this must be packed in a single strong bag of the gym duffle type. Do not use plastic bags as duffles. They are, however, good for lining a gym bag.

CHILDREN'S THEATRE AS EDUCATION

by Chris Mercogliano
Teacher at the Free School
Albany, New York

While teaching math again at The Free School this past year (my fifteenth), I stumbled across a wonderful discovery - the learning value, and beyond that the healing value of doing live theatre with kids.

There I was reverently doing my thing with a group of eight seven, eight, and nine year olds, some of whom were just coming from unhappy public school experiences and weren't the least bit interested in learning arithmetic, or in learning to read, or in anything that carried the scent of THE CLASSROOM. It wasn't working. This was a particularly diverse group of kids that just didn't get along at all, and they were resisting all my efforts to help them get into the flow of the school.

Since none of us was having a good time, I decided, "To hell with math!" It was time for me to start doing what I enjoyed doing more than anything else, reading aloud. I chose a juicy children's classic - George MacDonald's *The Princess and Curdie*, a turn-of-the-century English romance full of intrigue and magical beings and with both a girl and boy protagonist about the group's age. Listening was optional, and about half of them wandered in and out over the course of the first few chapters. I grew a bit doubtful about my choice, which was written in a language and a style quite foreign to the kids. My fears were laid to rest when I realized that the most tuned in was Fanon, the boy that I had been having the most difficulty with.

Somewhat dyslexic and still struggling with reading on the first grade level at age nine, Fanon was hanging on every word! His ability to understand the difficult syntax and to follow the long descriptive passages just amazed me - and his enthusiasm was quite contagious. Before long all eight were glued to their seats insisting that I read to them for the entire morning.

As the story drew to a dramatic and happy ending, I was deluged with a chorus of pleas to let them act it out. Having had no previous experience of any kind with theatre, I responded right from my gut (or lack thereof). "No!" I said, "The story is much too complex. How would you ever... And besides, this was a novel I read to you and not a play..."

Fortunately, the kids paid no attention whatsoever, and the next thing I knew, they had selected themselves for all of the major and minor roles in the play. Next I was appointed the director and told to hurry up and write down all of the characters and who had said they would play them. After I had managed to close my still-open mouth and catch my breath, I began to realize what was happening. Here was a bunch of cantankerous kids who couldn't cross the street together without battling with each other, and they had just cast their new play - with some of them choosing three and four different roles - by themselves without a single argument. Then, looking at the cast, I noticed that each of them had instinctively chosen the right roles for themselves. For instance, Fanon, who was not well-liked because of his constant teasing and bugging to get attention, was the unanimous choice to play the leading role of Curdie. Alyssa, always on the fringe and wanting to either be alone or play with much younger children, was to play the other lead, the dual role of the ancient queen and the beautiful young princess who saves the day with her magical powers. Clearly, I was witnessing a miracle and had better get on board.

My worries began in earnest when it was apparent that the kids intended to leave nothing out. An all out adaptation of the novel was called for; so, under the kids' direction, I started writing. My worries increased as they poured themselves into making costumes and backdrops and talked about inviting parents and grandparents too. As I wrote, I realized that the two leading actors could barely read and seldom remembered anything that I asked them to.

We needed a miracle, I thought, and I watched one gradually unfold each day. The kids were like a well-oiled machine from the beginning. They scrounged materials for costumes and scenery and lined up teachers to help with the production of the play, again with little or no squabbling. I was reminded of Sylvia Ashton Warner's concept of the "creative vent". She said that truly alive children are filled with energy constantly seeking release either through "creative vents" or through "destructive vents," and she discovered that the more her Maori students expressed themselves creatively the less they fought with each other. I was awestruck by the transformation taking place in my group. Occasional arguments occurred around how the play should proceed, and tensions definitely rose as the evening of the performance drew closer, but someone would always come up with a quick solution to the problem and hurt feelings were rare. It seemed to me that the drama in *The Princess and Curdie* was so compelling,

and the kids' identification with their characters so complete, that they no longer had much impulse to stir up "drama" with each other.

There were individual transformations that were equally amazing. Fanon, who had been working on memorizing the spelling of his last name when work on the play began, and to whom the idea of "homework" was anathema, studied his lines every night. He was having terrible trouble with one monologue near the climax of the play, so I suggested that we rewrite it in his own words and that he learn it that way. He came in the next morning with it perfectly memorized - in the original form! Alyssa was doing equally well learning the dialogue for her very large part, and was showing herself to be quite a talented actress. Usually arriving at school looking like an unmade bed, she began coming in with her long hair beautifully brushed. Matthew, painfully shy and quiet as a churchmouse, really started hamming up his role as the evil Lord Chamberlain, shouting out his lines to the back row. Britt, the archetypical good little girl, and typecast by the others as the little princess in the play, began asserting herself. She refused to just sit back and observe the final battle as George MacDonald had written in the original story, and insisted instead on slashing away with her dagger right alongside the boys. She also didn't want to be married to Curdie in the end, so we changed that too.

Each of the kids seemed to be going through an inner process that was exactly right for them. There is a branch of psychotherapy called Psychosynthesis that works with the various "subpersonalities" that each of us is comprised of; the idea being that by experiencing them and acting them out with awareness, the individual becomes more of an integrated "team" and more able to get what she/he wants in life. I saw each actor in our play experimenting with one or more of their "subpersonalities". Francis, a very talented, creative boy who is prone to violent outbursts, chose to play both the King and the devious butler who is part of the plot to poison him. In the end, the King manages to harness his rage at being betrayed and drive the evil forces out of his kingdom. Justin, who ordinarily keeps his anger and aggression under wraps, got into his role as the treacherous royal physician so much that the entire audience hissed when he came out for the scene where he tries to stab the king. He also cleverly improvised the role of one of the magical monster-creatures that helps Curdie. Justin considers himself "weird" at times, and creating this role seemed to me to be his way of getting at his wounded self-image. Then there is David who has a hot-tempered father and is furious

about living in the shadow of an idolized older brother choosing the role of Peter, Curdie's father. Peter, a kind and reasonable soul, arrives in the nick of time to heroically save his son from imminent death. David made such an entrance that it practically carried him into the audience during the performance, where his brother sat proudly watching. Tyler, a physically powerful and athletic boy who often shies away from non-physical challenge, played Lina, Curdie's wolf-like guardian that becomes a central hero figure during the play. Though it was a non-speaking role, Tyler received one of the loudest ovations at the end. Lastly of course, there was the teacher, whose Achilles' heel is to want to be in complete control in the classroom, and who suffers from both writing and performing inhibitions. I chose the role of narrator, which allowed me to be a facilitator BEHIND the action, helping to keep the flow going, but not in control.

It was a magnificent performance, played to a standing-room-only audience in a makeshift theatre in the upstairs of our school. Ovation after ovation brought the kids well-deserved acknowledgment for their three months of hard work. Reflecting back on it now, I think it was an invaluable process for everyone, containing so many kinds and levels of learning and healing. Mark Twain called children's theatre "one of the great inventions of the twentieth century, offering the greatest potential of all the arts for learning," and I certainly agree with him. I think the play became a model for learning for each of the kids, and for me as well. A couple of weeks after the performance, Fanon wrote a very moving poem that he wanted to read at a local annual poetry reading called, "The Readings Against the End of the World." The day before the reading he told me he had changed his mind because he was afraid he wouldn't be able to read what he had written. I asked him to think back to how he had managed to learn that difficult speech for the play, and reminded him of his success. He went ahead with the reading and did a great job. It seems to me that most importantly we all learned that anything is possible, given the motivation to do it. This was the kids' process, and the motivation was entirely their own. Also, there were no experts; everyone just figured out what it was that they needed to do. In the end, a group of inexperienced kids and their math teacher put on a play together, and had a good time at it.

Interestingly, organized children's theatre in the United States began in the settlement houses in New York City and Chicago at the turn of the century. Social activists like Jane Addams realized that live theatre offered an ideal way to bring diverse groups of uprooted

immigrant children together and to teach them communication and social skills as well as literature and language. Now, here we were in the inner city of Albany, New York, in a school which has certainly functioned as a settlement house at one time or another, beginning a little children's theatre, with what I trust was the first of many memorable performances.

TEACHING CREATIVE DRAMA IN AN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL SETTING

By Karen Stern*

Foreword

It may seem odd that such a short article has both a foreword and a postscript. But as I continue to learn, addition seems natural, almost essential. This article is almost a year old, and oh, what I have learned since then! Thus, a foreword.

Drama seems to me to fit naturally in with alternative education, especially creative drama, the process-centered, improvisational, participant-focused form. Don't see it; do it! is John Dewey's prescription. And creative drama, based somewhat loosely on Deweyan principles, does just that by having everyone involved make the drama. But what of product-centered drama, or more specifically, formal theater? Certainly exposing children to plays is crucial for their aesthetic development, but performing in them opens up a whole other realm of possibilities for growth. Discipline, that ugly, rejected, word in alternative education, also looms large as a principle for theatrical productions. As an actress and director, I am fully aware of this and accept it; however, my experiences in alternative education as a teacher have forced me to question everything. This "discipline" was the first thing to come up for review.

I wrote this article during an extremely frustrating year. It shows; the writing is tense, and the attitude is bitter. Looking back on that time and what happened after, I realize the questioning process continues. I am encouraged to go forward and explore the process/product, freedom/discipline paradox. After all, several students told me they want to do "it" again. Another play, another opening, another opportunity for questioning, learning, and growth. So be it. The show must go on.

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*Karen Stern writes about her experiences as a teacher at Upattinas School in 1986.

Non-Coercion - just what does this word mean? Easily we can define it as lack of force. But apply it to a school. Think of a school wherein going to class is an option. Students go when they *want* to learn.

In theory it is an agreeable proposition to me. It "feels" right. After all, I never learn anything when I don't want to. Yet my experiences of teaching in general, and specifically in an alternative school, make me question "theory" and begin to raise, as I swore I never would, practical issues.

Today is two weeks till production date. I am the drama teacher at this alternative school. And the school is having a meeting. Or rather, a series of meetings. Everyone attends a meeting; all previously planned activities are preempted. I have no doubt that these are important meetings. Another teacher has begun to question the validity of giving credit for attendance and participation in classes. The other teachers are excited. Perhaps we will see a change in the present apathy, which is more than apparent. The issues are numerous and bold. Should we abolish credit? How can we determine when someone is ready to graduate? What can we (the teachers) do to facilitate learning (surely a question that any good teacher asks)?

But me, I am discouraged because meetings preempt classes. *Acting* class. Our rehearsal for the play just two weeks away. A rehearsal which we desperately need. And the meetings show no signs of ending - the acting class (rehearsal) again will not occur. No one knows what these meetings will produce. We just know we need to meet some more and see.

I *do* know, however, what happens when we don't rehearse. And I realize the odds of putting on this play successfully are becoming more and more slender.

Meetings are not the only reason, of course. It's the theory behind them, the non-coercion. Every try to rehearse a play with no actors? And when cutting class is accessible, even rampant, why not cut?

I did tell those interested in performing that attendance at rehearsals is required. I didn't use that word (required) because of its negative connotations at this school, but I did emphasize the commitment involved in mounting a production. And this is what happened:*

1. Sam, originally interested in the play, decided he didn't want to come to school for a while. Which leaves the cast

in a jam - should we block him into the group scenes? It was agreed that we should trust him. He will honor this commitment. Sam dropped out of the play.

2. Charlie decided he would like to be in the play. He, too, has a problem with attendance. Again we trusted. Shortly before production, Charles decided he doesn't want to "do it".
3. Hank was "drafted" by the other cast members to take Sam's place. We re-blocked (spending several extra days going over what we had already done).
4. The school went on a week long camping trip. When we returned, everyone had naturally forgotten what they were to have done.
5. And now, the meetings, which threaten to go on FOREVER!

So where does that leave this play and those involved? I am frustrated, to be sure, but not distraught. I will go on to direct other plays, in other situations, to teach others. But what of these students? No doubt they have learned something from the rehearsals thus far. Process, after all, is powerful. Downstage, upstage, rehearsal, trust, etc. But the product is something too. Something they are looking forward to. And if they are unable to see the rehearsal process to its culmination (a play), will their anger and disappointment perhaps turn them off to drama and theater altogether? A lesson in commitment and responsibility will have been learned, but at what price? I don't know. I only know that formal theater might not belong in alternative educational settings at the high school level. I, at least, would hesitate before trying again.

Postscript

And this is the postscript to this tale. The play went on to be produced, and it was tremendously successful. Although Charles did drop out so close to production, another student rallied quickly to take his place. And, no, the meetings were not resolved until *after* the play was over. What had happened?

I had failed to count on the "alternative" in alternative education. This was not a traditional school, in which time structure is gospel; this was an alternative school. Yes, meetings take precedence over classes. But we needed time for rehearsals during the school day. The flexibility that allows for classes to be called off initially came to our rescue. "You guys need time for rehearsal? You got it!" The meetings were recessed daily for play rehearsal. I had temporarily lost

faith in the very thing that had attracted me to alternative education in the first place: respect for the individual (situation) and flexibility.

What I have learned is that formal theater *is* possible in alternative educational settings. To astonishing results, in fact. And that, perhaps, the unreasonable pressure that many drama teachers put on student actors and themselves in order to ascertain a "good" production may be misplaced or completely out of order. Maybe faith in the individuals involved and flexibility are the keys. Keys, I believe, for any director to consider using - to open the door to successful, *peaceful*, theatrical production.

*Names have been changed

A NEW LOOK AT LEARNING

by Daniel Greenberg
Sudbury Valley School

I

At the Sudbury Valley School we have encountered a new version of the old story of the parent-child dialogue: "Where did you go?" "Out." "What did you do?" "Nothing." All too often that seems to be the refrain associated with the school by parents and by people in the community. When the school opened, there was a whole catalogue of objections to what we were doing; as the years have passed most of them have slowly faded away. In the beginning, we were told that the problem was that we were new, and people didn't want to try out a new school before they knew whether it would work or survive, or be accredited. Of course now we're not new anymore, and we have survived, and we are accredited. Earlier, there was always the question of how our students could get into college without courses, grades, or transcripts. We had to try to convince people on the basis of abstractions. Now there isn't any question anymore, because any graduate who has wanted to go to college has been admitted. In fact, many have been getting in without a high school diploma. Then there was the question of how students would be able to transfer to other schools, in case their families moved, or they wanted to leave for other reasons. That too was an objection that people used as a reason for not enrolling their children - because perhaps at some later time they might have to go to a "regular" school, and then they wouldn't be able to get back to "reality." Now that argument has gone, because there are lots of former students who have gone back to "regular" schools and have done excellently, without losing time at all. There were so many objections in the early years! People said the school would be chaotic; it would be undisciplined; it would be rowdy; it would be a fiscal nightmare because so many people have access to money; and on and on. We used to think that when people finally saw that the objections were groundless, slowly but surely they would come around to our way of looking at things, or at least accept us and think that ours was a pretty reasonable kind of educational system for their children and/or themselves. Alas, how wrong we were! Because there is one fundamental objection that will probably stay with us for the foreseeable future: namely, that "this is a

place where children don't learn anything." This is something that the students enrolled at the school hear from their friends, and often from their parents. They hear it from grand-parents and aunts and uncles and cousins. We get it from all kinds of incredulous outsiders who walk into the school and say that it's very impressive, but then end with the view that students don't learn anything here. I think that this is probably the major factor that keeps new people from enrolling in droves.

What is really at the heart of the objection? It's not enough to answer by saying, "Yes, they *do* learn." We never really know how to handle it. The proposition seems so ridiculous, that we often end up saying, in effect, "What do you mean they don't learn anything? Look at A - he's learned this. Or look at B, he's learned this. Or look at this student sitting and reading." We respond with a flood of ad-hoc and ad-hominem counter-examples, with no real effect. And it's mostly because we really don't know how to get a handle on the nature of the problem or the question. Our answers don't really relate to the objectors. They look at A reading a book, and that doesn't satisfy them either. So he's reading a book! So what? That isn't learning. Nothing seems to satisfy them.

What, then, is the heart of this objection? Is it actually true that students don't learn anything at the school? If not, why do people think it is true? And what do students learn here? I'm going to address each of these questions in turn.

In order to get a handle on the whole problem, we have to analyze fairly closely the generally accepted view of learning. In this culture, the meaning of the word "learning" is closely determined by four fundamental assumptions. The first assumption is that one knows what ought to be learned by people. The second assumption is that one knows when it ought to be learned. The third assumption is that one knows how it ought to be learned. And the fourth assumption is that one knows by whom each thing ought to be learned. These four assumptions in essence determine the meaning of the concept "learning" for this culture. Let's look at them one by one.

II

The first assumption is that we know what ought to be learned. That is to say, the prevailing view is that there is a basic body of knowledge that every human being should know. This assumption is

not even discussed. The only thing that is ever argued is the exact composition of the "basics."

It is important to realize that this assumption is not an objective reality. Rather, it is completely determined by the time and the place and the nature of the culture that makes it. In other words, far from being a general truth about knowledge and about learning, it is an assumption that is completely dependent on the state of the culture that makes it. In different eras and in different places, various societies have made - and still make - catalogs of what has to be learned. For example, not too long ago, in American culture, there was the simple tenet that the "three R's" were the basics. During the twentieth century, education in this country has been "modernized," and to that list of three R's have been added successively other subjects that were considered equally important. Consider the 19th century in Great Britain: then it was felt that an educated person has to know Greek and Latin literature. In fact, it was considered that only unsuccessful or stupid students would study scientific or technological subjects, or even the English language! Then you go back to the Middle Ages and you find out that the "basics" consisted of a course in natural philosophy, speculative philosophy, rhetoric, and so forth, and a very clear avoidance of practical subjects. I don't want to go into a history of this subject. I only want to make the simple point that the assumption that we know what ought to be learned is determined completely by the cultural environment, and changes with time. Unfortunately, the one we're stuck with right now in this country was determined by an industrial technological view of our culture that is obsolete.

Indeed, two of the three R's are demonstrably obsolete. Nobody really needs to know arithmetic. Everybody uses pocket calculators, or calculating machines, or computers, or adding machines. No accountant will sit and add long columns of figures by hand, or multiply by long multiplication, or divide by long division. Even the best will make more mistakes by hand than by machine. I can't think of anybody professional who uses arithmetic now. Even people who go out shopping take along their little pocket calculators on which they tot up their expenditures. As far as writing is concerned, that word has many meanings, but certainly two of the main meanings were penmanship and spelling, which were considered very important because people communicated either orally or through writing longhand letters. Today, anybody who's foolish enough to use hand-writing is really at a disadvantage in any practical situation.

Many schools and colleges don't even accept handwritten papers. Your average letter of application for a job, or your average business correspondence, would never be done longhand. In fact, it's considered an almost esoteric phenomenon if a person drops somebody a handwritten note. And it's equally unimportant to know how to spell. An awful lot of people I know, some of whom are very famous people, don't have the foggiest notion how to spell. Even prominent people. One of the things any good secretary is expected to do is to correct all the boss' spelling, and even secretaries don't have to know how to spell: all they have to do is get paid for the time it takes to look up words in the dictionary.

The point is simply that the concept of curriculum that prevails right through college was determined by the industrial society that this country had in the 19th century. There were certain fundamental skills, methods, procedures, and technologies that were needed in order to keep the industrial machine going. And I don't mean on the blue collar level alone, not only for the people who worked the assembly lines, but also for the secretaries, the accountants, the bookkeepers, and even the executives. The whole industrial machine operated according to some relatively simple robot-like functions that enormous numbers of people had to perform, and for which it was indeed necessary to have a basic, universal common curriculum for everybody. Of course, even then it was a question of whether or not a culture opted to have an industrial economy at all. The large agrarian economies didn't bother with these things. For example, Russia at the time of the revolution was just beginning to decide that it wanted to get into the industrial era, and the illiteracy rate was something like 95%. It just wasn't important for a mass rural culture to know the three R's. In fact, in the entire society there was only a small cadre of people who could write. Everyone else would go to these scribes to have all their letters and documents written or read for them. But for the population at large, it wasn't essential to know how to read or write to calculate or do any such thing in order to till the land or build the houses or do the kinds of activities that were central to an agrarian society.

Times change. In this country, we have come to the point where the most routine tasks do not have to be performed by people, even though often they still are. We have the inherent capability to eliminate from the humanly-operated domain the entire body of automatic, robot-like operations that had to be done by enormous numbers of people. Indeed, the revolution that the modern

communications industry has brought about in society is quite as profound as the revolution that mechanization achieved a century or two ago, when it simply did away with the need for vast numbers of physical laborers to do heavy work. (That revolution, too, was not universal; and there are some societies today where heavy mass labor is still used.) The new information-processing technology is now doing away with the need for droves of workers in industrial plants, or bookkeepers, or purchasers, or secretaries. Nowadays, once an industry is computerized, most of the operations are untouched by human hands. For example, when you place an order for a book with a major publisher, virtually everything is handled by computer. And when the inventory drops, and they need to order a new printing, the computer tells the presses to do it. You can imagine how many thousands of clerks have been replaced. I was in the publishing industry when this transition took place, and I worked for two companies, one of which was automated, and the other still had all its accounting done by bookkeepers standing behind tall desks just like you see in old movies - standing and writing longhand all the thousands of entries that had to be made day by day. Those bookkeepers don't work there anymore; even that old-fashioned company has entered the computer era.

The point is that robot-like individuals are not needed any longer in large numbers to man the industrial machine, and this fact has, at a stroke, rendered obsolete the entire pedagogical conception of a basic set of things that have to be known by everybody. Now we are faced with a completely different educational problem. I'm not talking about the Sudbury Valley School, or about our particular philosophy. What I'm saying applies to anybody planning an educational system for the modern era in this country. Nowadays, instead of preparing a list of subjects that are necessary for everybody to know, all you can do is draw up an enormous catalogue of different subjects and activities that are available in the culture, and then proceed from that point. If you believe in a planned society, you can try to apportion a certain number of people to each of these various fields for the good of society as a whole. That's a political decision, one which still doesn't mean, of course, that everybody is going to learn the same thing. It implies a complete lack of freedom of choice on the part of the students, but at least it's modern, and it doesn't make the basic mistake of thinking that everybody ought to be trained in the same way. The other major political philosophy that is prevalent in the world today is that of personal freedom. In that

system, it seems to me that you have to end up saying that each person should be able to decide for himself what he wants to do. But the chief point I want to make is that regardless of political philosophy, the idea that there is a basic curriculum that everybody ought to know is gone.

Let us return now to the original question, and let me bring it down to specifics. Say we have a twelve-year old in the school and somebody asks, "Is he learning anything?" What they mean is that they know that every twelve-year-old should be studying social studies, advanced arithmetic, and English grammar. This is the assumption that underlies the question. So if we answer, "He is not learning social studies. He is learning photography, or music, or Greek history" - indeed, if we answer that he is learning *anything else* but social studies, English grammar, and advanced arithmetic, the questioners will not be satisfied. As far as they are concerned, as long as the students in this school who are twelve years old aren't learning what the society today thinks every twelve-year-old ought to be learning, *they are not learning.* And it's only when people realize that it's a mistake, no matter what your philosophy of education is, to think in the late 20th century that twelve-year-olds ought to be learning a specific set of subjects - only when people realize that this just isn't a viable educational view any more for modern American society, only then will they be able to say, "Well, I don't have to insist that they learn social studies, arithmetic, and English grammar when they are twelve. I can accept other subjects, other activities, as valid learning for a twelve-year-old."

The second underlying assumption is that one knows *when* a subject ought to be learned. This has a more modern origin that the first assumption. It's only been recently that people have become arrogant enough to know in detail how and when one absorbs and handles knowledge. To be sure, people always knew that little children don't quite have the ability to handle things as well as adults, overall. But people saw that there was such a variety in how children develop that no one dared become dogmatic. A Mozart might play the piano at age three, and a John Stuart Mill might speak a dozen languages when he was four; one child would do one thing, another child did something else. It was only when psychology became "modern" that it got the idea that there is a specific, universal track that every mind follows in its development, and that all healthy minds proceed at pretty much the same rate along this track. One of the consequences of this view is that it's bad to be learning the wrong thing at the wrong time. For example, if you are expecting somebody

by age two to do a particular thing, and you find that he is not, then you conclude that you have an incipient learning disability. I'm not exaggerating when I say age two. It is becoming much more common to extrapolate into earlier years, and engage in what is called "early detection" of alleged learning disabilities and psychological problems.

It is considered a property of the human mind that certain mathematical skills, certain scientific skills, and certain skills of reasoning are acquired at certain ages. As a result, it becomes important (according to this view) that schools provide exactly the "right material" at the right age. Also, it is considered bad to give third grade work to first grade students, because this doesn't develop their minds along the proper track. I think everybody is aware of these views.

One of the things that set me to thinking about this whole subject was a nightmare I had one night. I dreamt that just as we have schools now where all six-year-olds are put through drills in reading, and are drilled and drilled at it, whether or not they are interested in it - and if they don't achieve at the proper rate, they are immediately tagged and put into a special category and given special teachers - what I dreamt was that the same thing was happening to one and two-year-olds with regards to speaking. I suddenly saw a school for toddlers where they were all being taught how to speak, just the way we teach how to read, syllable by syllable, word by word. And if they weren't proceeding at the programmed place they were going to be placed immediately into the "speaking disability category," and so forth. Perhaps this sounds ridiculous, but after all, we've totally accepted this attitude when it comes to reading. Why not speaking? And if you have three-year-old who is speaking at a "two-year-old level," why not put him in the Special Ed. class? It's a nightmare, and I think its well on its way to happening.

So again you ask yourself, where does this come from? How do these psychologists pull it off? Why was the society in general, and the professionals in psychology in particular, so eager to accept this kind of approach? Again, I think the answer goes back to my old theme. The so-called science of psychology today is the natural child of the 19th century industrial-technological-scientific world view, which insisted on reducing everything in the world to a linear, tracked, simple series of progressions. This was essentially the definition of knowledge in any field. There was no such thing as real, solid knowledge that was not perfectly ordered, in an exact sequence of rational steps. If it wasn't ordered in that way it was non-scientific, it

was "art," and as art it was allegedly the product of the emotions and of the feelings and not of the mind. Products of the intellect, by contrast, had to be "scientific." I don't think it's surprising people reached this view, because they were living in an era when everybody was drunk with the success of linear technology in the material world. After all, the view was appropriate to machines - to mass production - to the assembly line - to industrialization - to any enormous technological venture. It was true that those enterprises were ordered in a precise, linear fashion. So central was the industrial materialistic view of the world, that it engulfed all of knowledge, and the universal aspiration of the intellectual world was to be included under the umbrella of "science", in order to be legitimate. Indeed, if anybody came along and said, "My field doesn't want to be organized in a logical, rational way," they ran the risk of being called a non-intellectual field, of being told, "If you can't show us the track of knowledge in your field, you're not really worthy of being a bona-fide subject." This approach was a perfectly natural product of the enthusiasm with technology that gripped Western society in the 19th century. People were consumed with a passion to extrapolate the technological world view to absolutely everything. And the fields of social theory and psychology were swept right along with all the others.

If you understand, then, that there is a deep yearning on the part of social scientists and psychologists to be "scientific" and along comes a person who purports to give, on the basis of what looks to be a very nice scientific work, a good linear theory of the mind, you can see why they will jump at it. And it comes then as no surprise that people like Piaget or Skinner rapidly become widely accepted by their colleagues, because they rescued the profession from the oblivion of being an "art" and turned it into a scientific discipline. I think that this idea is going to fall by the wayside eventually, but it's only going to happen when the whole culture begins retreating from the technological world view. You can see a trend in that direction in modern thinkers today. There are books being published by very eminent social scientists who are beginning to say, "This view of human knowledge really isn't valid. It doesn't take into account the subtleties. It doesn't take into account the complexities. It doesn't take into account innovation. It doesn't take into account change. It doesn't take into account the emergence of new theories, new ideas. It simply isn't adequate to explain what the human mind has done with the world." This is being said by more and more people who have a

name in their fields. Whether their voice is going to prevail in the long run I don't know, because certainly in the short run the trend is toward a more feverish technologization of the social sciences. I think we are going to have a major struggle on this issue in this country, although for the time being the forces of technology are probably on top.

IV

The third assumption generally made is that one knows how any subject ought to be learned. That there is a "proper" approach. That there is a "correct way" to study a subject. Even if we have in our school a person who is learning what "ought" to be learned - for example, social studies - at the "right" time - namely, at age twelve - if the person isn't learning it in the "right" manner from the "right" textbook, it's not considered valid. The extent to which this has taken over education is astounding. It used to be widely accepted that there were a tremendous variety of approaches to any subject. One went to different schools, even travelled to different countries, to hear different people develop a specific subject in different ways. One went to a particular teacher because he had a fascinating way of presenting a certain subject. This was an accepted feature of learning. Any subject was thought to be varied, complex and intricate, and every original mind was thought to have a different way of looking at it. It was once considered the height of absurdity to say that there is a "best" way to teach physics, or social studies, or anything. Alas, pedagogy, too, wanted to become a science, no less than psychology. Pedagogy too had to become an exact, technological field. The obvious result was that everything had to be done in the same way or it wasn't valid. All textbooks in a given field have to be the same. That's almost an axiom of publishing today. If you submit a textbook manuscript to a publisher that deviates from the accepted way, you'll get a rejection slip. It may be a great book, but if it is not the way the subject is taught in the schools, they won't want to publish it. Of course, in a sense publishers are just representing the prevailing view. They are marketing agents, and they don't want to get stuck with a book that won't sell. What they are saying is that nobody out there in the educational world is going to use a book that is any different from the book that is used by everyone else.

I don't have to belabor this. It's an exact consequence of the kind of thinking that I was talking about earlier with regard to

psychology. And in order to please somebody who is looking at Sudbury Valley in terms of the prevailing educational atmosphere, our shelves should be filled with the current editions of textbooks in all fields that are being studied in other schools. That would be a "good" library. Our library has a lot of books in it, and they are very varied, but it basically cannot be considered a "good" school library as far as educators are concerned because in any given subject they are going to look around here and not going to find only the "right" book in most fields. And the same applies to any student learning with the aid of any of these books.

I think, again, that in this regard a lot of people who stop to think about it realize that there is a basic flaw in the idea, regardless of their philosophy of education. The flaw is that it rules out completely any concept of innovation in a field. What's missing is any reference to how any one of the subjects being taught in school has ever changed or progressed. The textbooks always deal with static subjects presented "correctly." To me this is an internal inconsistency that should be obvious to anybody. I can only hope that eventually this contradiction will come to somebody's attention in the teacher's colleges. Or perhaps this view will disintegrate on its own. As long as you assume that pedagogy is an art, or has variety, you are never under pressure to be right. You only have to have your own approach. You go to hear a teacher, and you either like his approach or you don't like his approach, but you don't ask whether his approach is "right." You say that it is self-consistent, or interesting, but it is not a question of being right or not. But in the present educational system people are constantly plagued with the problem of finding the "right" approach, and each time they find one they label it "right," and it becomes very embarrassing a year or two later to be faced with a situation where it turns out that it wasn't right after all. That leads to a lot of problems. There is always a "new" reading program. Every two or three years there is a whole new "right" way to teach reading, because the last "right" way didn't work. The educational world is constantly being embarrassed, only they don't ever seem to be ashamed of the fact that they were wrong. I guess there is always a hope that between the fact that they never seem to do the right thing, and the fact that actually there is no right thing, it may dawn on people eventually that the whole approach is invalid from beginning to end.

V

The fourth assumption is that one knows how to identify by whom any given subject ought to be learned. In a way this is the most insidious of all assumptions, but it follows directly from all the other points I have made. Our schools have a sophisticated and ever-improving system for tracking people, and for finding out at an ever earlier age what specific "aptitudes" a person has, so that a precise, narrow track can be determined for this person to follow throughout life. In this society, such a process is exceptionally subtle, because it involves an authoritarian approach within a free culture. By employing a variety of ruses the system produces a process which allows it to inhibit personal freedom without really feeling that this is what is going on. The person doesn't feel that something arbitrary is being done to him - which is in fact what is happening. Instead, the system creates the impression that it is simply looking out for his own best future, trying to find out what his needs are, and helping him fulfill them. The fact that others are deciding what his needs and interests are, what he is going to do with his life, is covered over by the illusion that really it is only *his needs* that are being considered. Now this is a combination of all the evils we have talked about. The assumption is that psychologically one knows enough about the mind to identify aptitudes; and a further assumption is that once one knows aptitudes, one also knows how to track a person so he will in fact reach the goal that is being set out for him. The whole approach is the ultimate in pedagogical and psychological technology. The only trouble is that it is humanly absurd. All you have to do is read biographies to discover how, time and again, attempts to identify a person's interests at an early age failed. To be sure, sometimes a person of three or four does give very definite indications of where he is heading, but most of the time quite the opposite is the case, and very often people show their true aptitudes only in their 20's and 30's and sometimes much later. Truly, there is not much to argue if we only look at the real world around us.

I think that we can understand why people in their society are going to feel, no matter what, that students at Sudbury Valley don't learn anything. They are bound to feel that way. There is just no way out. Because we are not fulfilling any of the four basic assumptions that define the new meaning of "learning" for our culture. And there is no way our philosophy allows us to act on any of these assumptions. So there is no point answering a person, "Look, A is reading a book,

and B is learning this and that." Our approach just doesn't fit the whole society's frame of reference, and it's not going to fit until the outside world drops the assumptions that underlie its view of education.

VI

Still, the question remains: Do people learn anything at Sudbury Valley? Obviously to us, the answer is "yes," from *our* perspective on the word "learning" - a perspective that may not be current, but is nevertheless rooted in our culture's history.

The kinds of learning processes that I see occurring at the school all the time fall into four major categories. First, I think we have learning going on here in the development of personal character traits. Right off, that doesn't sound like "learning." But actually, character education has always historically been considered an important part of education, and even today gets a lot of lip service paid to it. Unfortunately, in the current educational system, it's talked about but nobody has any idea what to do about it. I think that we have developed a setting in which it can be shown that certain character traits are enhanced - traits like independence, self-reliance, confidence, open-mindedness, tolerance of differences, the ability to concentrate, the ability to focus, and resilience in the face of adversity. Everyone of these traits tends to thrive in people who stay here for any length of time. Indeed, the society at large sees the opposite traits being enhanced in their educational institutions and they worry about it. They worry about the fact that their settings seem to encourage dependence, a "follower" mentality that relies on others' judgments rather than on one's own. They worry about the fact that such a high percentage of people are insecure, intolerant, unable to concentrate on their work, and not resilient to failure. All these are phenomena that people in general are worried about, and I think that at Sudbury Valley we can show that we foster the first set of character traits where the prevailing educational system fosters its opposites.

The second major type of learning that goes on here is in the domain of social etiquette. That will probably amuse a lot of people, because often one of the first impressions people get from the children in this school is that they are brash. But I don't think that this is a lasting impression. More important, I think that there are many aspects of social etiquette that flourish here in a striking manner: for example, being at ease with people of all ages and backgrounds and

types (instead of the widespread trait that you see among children of the same age in public schools whose tendency is to turn aside, not to look an adult in the eyes, to be ill at ease, to shuffle, and to mumble). There is the characteristic of being considerate of other people's needs - a trait that I think is fostered mainly by our judicial system. There is a fundamental acceptance that other people have rights, that other people have needs, that other people have domains of their own that have to be respected. Then there is the trait of being articulate (people are often so inarticulate in the outside world!). And the traits of openness and trust - I am very reluctant to use those words, but not quite as reluctant as I was in 1968, when they were catchwords for a social fad - as opposed to the suspicion and paranoia that seem to be rampant in the society, especially among teenagers. And also, there is a certain basic friendliness and courtesy that pervades relationships in the school.

A third category of learning that goes on is in the domain of academic subjects, where we not only see the acquisition of knowledge occurring , but we also find it taking place in ways that other schools would find unusual. For example, people do learn how to read in this school, sooner or later. It's intriguing to watch closely how this happens in each case, because it happens at different ages, and in completely different ways. I don't want to go into any details now, but just by way of example: some learn how to read by being read to over and over and practicing a book until they learn it by heart and start memorizing the words; others learn by piecing together syllables that they have picked up one by one; others learn by trying to associate letters with phonetic sounds. Each one does it in his own way, and at his own initiative. And I think it is very important for us to point out not only that substantive knowledge is being acquired but also by methods which are so varied that we would clearly be doing irreparable damage if we intervened and tried to direct the process from the outside.

Substantive learning goes on here in the fundamentals of arithmetic. It goes on in the principles of democratic government, and in current events. (This is actually rather interesting. The children in this school are probably more up to date on what's going on in the world than their peers in other schools even though we don't have "social studies" classes.) There is substantive learning going on here in the domestic arts, including money management, taking care of yourself, survival, cooking, sewing, childrearing - a whole group of subjects which in other schools are relegated to a tertiary place, for poor learners or for girls, though the subjects are clearly central to

living a good life. Here it goes on in ways that I think are worth documenting, ways that have nothing to do with age or sex or even with future career intentions. The list of different specific subjects learned by different people goes on and on - *writing, management*, painting, music, etc. - and it clearly deserves study and documentation.

Finally, there is a fourth category of learning that goes on here in a way that is not even remotely matched by any other environment, and that is the category of methodology. To be sure, there is a tremendous amount of writing done, for example, on the techniques of problem solving. But again, it's assumed in the usual technological way that there is a "method" for solving problems, and what one should do in school is teach this method. The only trouble is, the basic assumption is again false. If there was a method for solving problems, we wouldn't have any problems left. The whole point of a problem is that you don't know either its solution or the exact right method to solve it - if there is one. The idea that there are multiple approaches to problem solving, that there are lots of parallel paths that can be explored, that some are better than others, that they have to be compared, that there are all kinds of consequences that have to be followed out in order to make these comparisons - the really complex notions of what problem solving entails are an everyday feature of this school. Students have to deal with them every minute of the day in different areas. From small problems like how to get hold of a piece of equipment, or what to do next, to major problems like what am I going to do with my life, or how do I study a certain field, or how do I answer the questions posed in the book I am reading, and so forth. Sudbury Valley does it better than anybody else. Students here also learn how to use resources, both human and archival. To be sure, in other schools somewhere around fifth or sixth grade they take the children to the library and describe the Dewey decimal system, and the librarian gives a talk on how to use the library. We all went through this, but most people never can figure out how to use the library anyway, and don't. Anybody who has taught in college or graduate school knows that many graduate students have difficulty using the resources at their disposal. It's something that they have got to learn, and they have also got to figure out how to find the people who can help them. At Sudbury Valley we take all this for granted - the idea that when you want to learn something you have got to find someone who is an expert in it to help you, and you have got to figure out where you can find the resources in our library, or in an outside

one. These ideas, and how to implement them, are commonplace around here.

Perhaps it is fitting to end with something that Tolstoy wrote about 100 years ago. He wrote: "Don't be afraid! There will be Latin and rhetoric, and they will exist in another hundred years, simply because the medicine is bought, so we must drink it (as a patient said). I doubt whether the thoughts which I have expressed perhaps indistinctly, awkwardly, inconclusively, will become generally accepted in another hundred years; it is not likely that within a hundred years all those ready-made institutions - schools, gymnasia, and universities - will die, and that within that time there will grow freely formed institutions, having for their basis the freedom of the learning generation." Here was a great thinker writing in the 1860's that it would take another 100 years for these ideas to come to fruition. A century later, we were founded. It's uncanny. Will it take another 100 years to catch on?

TOOLS CRITICAL FOR THE SUCCESS OF HOMESCHOOLING

By Peter Ernest Haiman, Ph. D.*

Recently my family and I heard a talk to parents at the first annual Northern California Homeschooling Association meeting. The speaker had been asked to discuss the "socialization" of children and adolescents. For the ten minutes that he talked, he spoke about the topic by mainly criticizing current public education. The socialization of the young is as complex as it is important, but the speaker never helped his audience thoughtfully engage and/or analyze any of the issues involved. Important questions are at the heart of any discussion about socialization: How are we to educate our children/adolescents so that they may live happy, useful, and productive lives individually and collectively? How are we to educate our children so that they can fit into and/or modify the society they will inherit? These questions were never addressed.

The speaker not only failed to address the topic of socialization competently, he also misrepresented truth. He said that John Dewey's philosophy of education is the basis of current educational practice in most schools in the United States. This is false. He wrongly spoke out against Dewey's ideas and their influence on contemporary schools.

Anyone who reads John Dewey's *Democracy and Education (1916), Essays in Experimental Logic (1916), Human Nature and Conduct (1922), Experience and Nature (1925)*, or any other of his many publications on philosophy and education will quickly realize that John Dewey not only was the father of progressive educational ideas but is the man from whom John Holt, A.S. Neill, and many other more contemporary progressive educational philosophers got their inspiration and many of their ideas. It is indeed a sad irony that the speaker at the meeting blamed the current state of most of the

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nation's public and private school education on Dewey. In this writer's opinion, the last two generations of children and our country as a whole would have been fortunate if schools throughout the land had put Dewey's ideas into educational practice.

For parents to implement sound educational practices with their children, they must first develop their own philosophy of education. To do this they need and should demand the best tools to help them think about educational issues that are important for their children and themselves. They need to engage in a dialogue both with the best thinkers available and with other homeschooling parents.

Important questions need to be raised and answered. Homeschooling parents need intelligently to decide how and what their children should learn; how much and what kinds of freedom and discipline are appropriate; how their homeschooling should relate to the outside community; and many other important questions.

Theodore Brameld's book *Philosophies of Education in Cultural Perspective (1955)* is the best summary presentation and analysis of mankind's thoughts about to what ends and by what means children should be educated. This book has long been recognized as a classic in the field. In the preface to his book, which is a letter addressed to prospective teachers, Brameld writes challenging paragraphs of great importance to homeschooling parents. "When philosophy does its job, it disturbs anyone it touches. I hope that you will be disturbed by this book. If you are not, then the book has not succeeded in compelling you to subject your beliefs to re-examination, perhaps to modification, possibly even to rejection or drastic reconstruction. Unless you are willing to take the risk that this will happen, you can scarcely expect to qualify as a thoroughly trained teacher - as one whose beliefs about education and about the culture it serves have been weighed and tested." (Brameld, 1955, p.vi) "I readily admit that the task is arduous. Issues as basic as those education now confronts can never be resolved hastily or superficially. If you are willing to go forward with me, you will find that we shall need assistance from the most profound minds of history: Plato, Locke, Hegel, James, Freud, and a great many others. We shall need, further, to consider questions and situations that often create bitterness, even violence. Nothing less than a willingness to study and act upon them as honestly and forthrightly as possible will suffice." (Brameld, 1956, p. vii)

It is the responsibility of homeschooling boards and the indivdual members of homeschooling groups throughout the country

to see that the important questions posed and the differences reflected in the philosophies of education presented in Brameld's book are thoughtfully discussed. Homeschooling parents can subscribe to and implement with their own children philosophies of education that are different from the philosophies of other homeschooling parents. But whatever philosophy they adopt, it should represent the culmination of a process of analyzing, comparing, contrasting, and thinking about alternative educational philosophies and practices. People need not agree on their educational philosophy but they should agree that, for their children's sake, a thoughtful process is required to arrive at their own educational philosophy.

It is not enough to be against something like the current quality of most public and private education. Oh yes, it feels good to criticize those who you oppose. But criticism is only the first, small step. By itself, it will not help homeschooling survive as a movement. Criticism of current public and/or private school education, by itself, will not help homeschooling parents thoughtfully and deliberately engage the ideas they must consider if they are to be of benefit to their children.

Homeschooling, like any movement that wants to be useful and survive, must first and foremost, become an accurately informed movement. Knowledge is and forever will be power. It is up to homeschoolers to make sure that they obtain only qualified people to talk to them in homeschooling meetings. The people who talk to homeschooling families must have accurate knowledge and make thorough presentations to parents about the important issues and questions that pertain to the education of their children and adolescents. Good feelings and wishes about homeschooling will not build its success. An accurately informed homeschooling community can.

MOVEMENT IN EDUCATION
Part 2

by David Boadella*

(From a talk given to a group of physical education teachers in Liverpool, England, in 1971 - continued from Winter, 1988 issue of the journal).

So let us look for a moment at the role of movement in the therapeutic sense. Even if it does not, usually, happen in school, it certainly concerns children. In 1966, at Senate House London, the Laban Art of Movement studio put on a three day course which was called "Movement as therapy". It was the first tentative venture of that versatile group into the area of therapy. This was followed four years later by a conference in Edinburgh that was concerned with "Communication without words". People from therapeutic and from educational disciplines took part.

One of the first papers given there was on the treatment of autistic children. Now it is true that you are rather unlikely to meet the severe problems of the autistic child in the ordinary school. But he demonstrates in a particularly clear way the state of being of someone whose movement impulses are radically blocked, and from an early age. These children are usually intensely withdrawn, they have a lot of latent but unexpressed anger, and very often the block on motility is sufficiently severe to have affected speech. Psychologists are divided about them. Some believe that this is an inborn condition, due to some neurological defect. But there is a body of evidence accumulating to show that these are children who were *turned off* by their environment. Something emotionally crippling happened in early infancy, which stopped them wanting to reach out and to communicate with their environment. Since they do not communicate through words, conventional methods of teaching or of psychological treatment are difficult to apply. But recently a number of different

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approaches to this severe problem have been made through movement therapy, and through movement education.

I am going to describe something of this approach to you. It has proved capable of restoring speech, and improving the motor functions and power to communicate of autistic children. It has also proved to be a basic method of working with people who have any kind of emotional problem. It is axiomatic in this approach that emotional disturbance always registers in a movement disturbance.

All this work I have been describing involves very fundamental areas of movement. I would like to call this the level of the *involuntary* movement responses. We do not really choose our emotions, you know. When you fall in love, or become anxious, or are made to feel furious about something you are moved from within by a very powerful energy. What you have control over is the bodily expression of this emotion. Unfortunately people learn, very often, to control not only the outward acting-out of strong emotions, they turn against the emotions themselves. And the end product of this is a life which is lived more from the head than from the heart. A.S. Neill called one of his books "Hearts not heads in the school" - a provocative title, but one that suggests that it is easy for educators to get their priorities wrong.

Let me suggest that the fundamental choice facing us in education is one between spontaneity and conditioning.

There is basically a choice between *spontaneity*, creativity, as a source of action; and *conditioning*. Let me try to make the distinction clear by dwelling a little longer on the two contrasted situations in schools. The key note of any go-ahead progressive primary school today (and I single primary schools out here deliberately, because I think the school today is orientated around the children's *inner needs*: emotional, intellectual, physical). It has been recognized at last that children learn best what they need to learn, and what they need to learn is what satisfies them, and nourishes them. So the progressive primary school is orientated around *pleasure*, it is geared to offering and encouraging *pleasurable activities*. Children are led to explore their environment at first hand, that is by discovery methods where creative thinking and insight are at a premium. They also explore their own with one's heart, inner resources, and learn to find themselves as persons, through such media as dramatic work, creative writing, group music making, painting and modelling etc. Anyone engaged on work of this kind with children soon learns to trust the child, and to trust human nature. Without this trust, without the

confidence in the creative potential of children, and the patience to wait for this to unfold, this kind of education would not be possible.

I won't have much to say about the contrasted method of education: it is associated with dislike of school, anxiety in the presence of teachers, the possibility of punishment, results, learning to repeat what is in the textbook, and so on. I am not concerned here with whether exams are a good or a bad thing. I am concerned with the *means* of getting there, and whether they are good or not. One of the cardinal principles established by the then Ministry of Education, through its Inspectorate, was that education should be suited to the child's *current* stage of development, it should not always be a preparation for the next stage. To put it simply, if we teach nature study to infants, it is because infants are interested in the world around them, and are better people if they use their senses to explore it, NOT because the university would like more science graduates, or the government more technicians.

Contrasted Viewpoints

In terms of physical education, this means that one wants to make the movement experiences as far as possible situations that children will enjoy in their own right. They must be helped to develop kinaesthetic pleasure from the aware use of their own bodies. This was where Rudolf Laban came along to produce a quiet revolution in movement education in Britain, because his focus was on encouraging greater and greater degrees of self-awareness and sensitivity to fine nuances of movement, and his ideas lend themselves to a free, but controlled use of the body.

I should like to talk for a little about how I see this Laban movement work. What he provides is a kind of vocabulary of movement. After all if movement is a form of communication, then you can have movement sentences. I like to see the various categories of movement description that Laban uses as resembling the forms of grammar: there are basically, nouns and adjectives, verbs, prepositions and adverbs.

The noun and the adjective together give you a description of a body shape. Think of all the immense varieties of human posture, think of all the attitudes they can express, the degrees of tension and relaxation, strong positions, twisted shapes, the nuances of the human stance. Think of all those colloquial expressions: the hang-dog look, the stiff upper lip, a man who digs his heels in, he had no stomach for it, put your back into it, take it on the chin, and any number more. All these indicate both a typical posture and certain character attitudes.

In Laban movement work the posture of the body and its muscular expression says something about WHO one is. This is also of course the foundation of dramatic expression since the first thing an actor has to learn to do is to feel himself into the bodily and kinaesthetic state of being of the character he is trying to portray.

Well after the nouns and adjectives we have the verbs. After the who, the *what*. What do people do with their bodies when they move them? Laban tended to divide action movements into two groups - locomotory, those that take you from place to place, and *gestures*, where the body may stay in one area of space, but the upper part particularly, the arms, eyes and face, are used to express a meaning. What Laban was trying to do in his physical education work was to extend the range of movement capacities in people. He found that people were usually very restricted in their movements. Their bodies limited them. And his aim was to extend these limits.

Then one can think about the prepositions of movement: up, down, in, out, to, from, with, without, back, forward. These define one's orientation in space. It is interesting to reflect on the development of locomotory movements in animals:-

The very earliest animals, protozoa, one-celled creatures, had no heads and no tails. Their movement was confined to one dimension: basically they could flow in or they could flow out. (It is interesting to record in passing that the word exploration means literally, to flow out). Or if you like to use Laban terms, they could open and they could close. With the development of the body-shape to the stage of the worm, there is a clearly defined head end and tail end. Movement forwards and backwards in a clear sense now becomes possible.

Finally, with the attainment of verticality and the upright posture in the higher primates, the directions up and down have a much fuller meaning. There is a whole literature on this dimension alone - the physiology and psychology of the upright posture of man, that I could refer to. The fundamental idea behind it is that in attaining the upright posture man has the maximum defiance of gravity, and the maximum degree of instability, as compared with a four-legged animal. At the same time, by virtue of the fact that to stay upright at all his posture must be dynamic, he must constantly be making minor adjustments in order to defy gravity and avoid falling over (you have only to shut your eyes for a moment and stand on one leg to appreciate the instability latent in human uprightness) he is also more adaptive in his posture than any other animal. The skill of the

matador who can pivot on his small centre of balance, and twist his body in the lateral plain more than other animals, is usually quite enough to enable him to outwit the much more linear movement of the four-legged bull.

The whole question of the relationship of a person to the ground he stands on is a fascinating one, and there are many possibilities in Laban's approach for exploring it. Security is related to one's posture in relation to the ground; indeed one can talk of grounding as a very fundamental quality which the child develops as he moves towards independence. There is also a relationship between the way one perceives the world, and the kind of grounding one has in terms of posture. If one has one's feet on the ground one is not going to have one's head in the clouds. And the word "understanding" means what it says. We can think clearly about the world if we are able to stand firmly and securely in it.

The next part of movement-speech to look at is the *how* of movement - the adverbs. Laban spoke of effort qualities. I prefer to see this as a descriptive account of the qualities and expression of energy in a person. Laban distinguished attitudes to space - flexible and inflexible, (straight pathways or indirect, wandering pathways); attitudes to time - quick movements or sustained movements; and attitudes to weight - delicate movements and forceful movements. He also made an even more fundamental distinction between bound movements, characterized by tension, and free-flowing movements characterized by relaxation. Again the direction of his work is to explore the range of movement possibilities, to develop the capacity for delicate movement possibilities, to develop the capacity for delicate movements in those who are brusque and forceful, to develop the ability to sustain aggression and to apply force, in those who are too passive or quiet.

You see how the remedial and the educational are inseparable, because here we are back with fundamental ideas of the ability to be tender and sensitive, and the ability to apply all one's energy towards a given objective. Above all, the development of awareness in people into their own energy qualities, and effort patterns.

We have had the who, the what, the where and the now of movement, but not the why. To discover the why one needs to read the movement sentence, since all movements are either expressive of some communication, or are functional in an exploratory, work-oriented kind of way.

And Laban recognized with his emphasis on group work that one moves in relation to others. The why of movement can be answered only in the context of the group process, the group that is the microcosm of society and of human interaction.

And here we enter the realm of drama.

Much has been written about the role of drama in schools, and one of the best books on the subject in my opinion is that by Brian Way. Way is one of the people who have emphasized most clearly that drama is really about becoming aware of yourself, and aware of other people. It is to do with coming alive, and with being able to feel what someone else is feeling. Again the link with the world outside the school and beyond the stage, can be made with the development of the human potential movement and the encounter culture. There is now a growing realization that modern conditions of life lead to people becoming out of touch, depersonalized, and disembodied. The encounter movement is a kind of growth-orientated spontaneous experience where people are encouraged to explore the emotions that are normally not expressed in the conventions of everyday relationships.

I have left to the end what many people think of as the prime purpose of movement education, to teach specific skills. I regard the specific skills as techniques that are best built on the foundation I have already been describing. It has been recognized in most modern drama schools for example, that the most effective way of getting someone to portray another person convincingly, you have to get through to the actor at a deep personal level. That is why many people associated with the method school of acting have been people interested also in personal change, and in looking more honestly at their own motives and goals in life, than the average person perhaps does.

In the realm of specific movement skills then, there are also changes afoot. In the past skill-teaching has tended to be governed by the heavy hand of tradition. If one thinks of the traditional sports, cricket, football perhaps things have not changed much. And yet a Sobers or a Pele are distinguished most of all by the fact that they seem to involve their *whole body* in what they are doing, and by their mastering of those factors of time, space, and weight that Laban described. In a sport in which I am particularly interested - Judo, there were stereotyped ways of teaching the basic throws that were honored by tradition in Japan and which spread to the west. But recently to the consternation of the traditionalists, a man called

Gleason, who is British National Coach, astonished everyone by showing from a careful examination of photographs of Judo experts in action, that these experts were breaking most of the rules that the coaches had tried to lay down. So instead of perpetuating the dead hand of a skills-tradition that the experts only were intelligent enough to violate, Gleason is now encouraging a much more personal style in the teaching of this sport. He is encouraging those learning it to approach movement situations as challenges which can be solved by trial and error, by exploration, by innovation, in other words by sensitive and intelligent feeling for one's own body in relation to an opponent and in relation to space. Gleason has in fact brought a Laban movement approach to bear on an international sport and has revolutionized the teaching of it. The result has been a much higher standard of Judo throughout the areas where he has had influence.

Let me try to sum up. I am suggesting that children in school would benefit from a carefully planned series of movement experiences in which they were helped to gain an increased and enriched sense of identification and feeling for their own bodies. That a Laban movement approach, coupled to some of the postural concepts found in Judo teaching, and with some of the expressive outlets used in movement therapy - can help children to get not only more in touch with themselves, but more in touch with each other. That the kinaesthetic awareness so developed is the basis on which the teaching of specific skills and crafts should rest. I am also suggesting that if this kind of body-awareness approach is coupled with the kind of self-exploration through drama that Brian Way has described, then this is a way of helping children to gain insight into the feelings of others, and so can be that basis of a rational moral education. That a rich dramatic experience of this kind can be a well-spring to nourish the arts.

Education, it seems to me, is concerned with developing sensitivity both to the outer world that we seek to control through the sciences and technologies, and in a more personal way through crafts; and with the inner world of emotions and aesthetic appreciation, that is expressed in the arts. My belief is that for the exploration of space, both outer and inner, movement education of the broad basis that I have tried to suggest, is the best preparation.

Part III

A COMPARISON OF HOME SCHOOLING AND CONVENTIONAL SCHOOLING: WITH A FOCUS ON LEARNER OUTCOMES

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Summary of Parts I and II

Introduction

A renascence of the home as the center of learning for youth has occurred recently in the United States. There is now a visible and sizeable group of people who are known as unschoolers, deschoolers, or, more commonly, home schoolers. Whereas prior to the 20th century "...American children attended small common schools for only a few weeks each year, with the attendance beginning at some point between the ages of 8 and 12" (Moore, 1985, p. 63), most children now begin attending instructions at about age six for nearly nine months per year. This is changing for many, however. Estimates of numbers of home schooling families range from 10,000 to 50,000 (McCurdy, 1985) to one million (Hewitt Research Foundation, 1986b). The number and dedication of parents and children involved in this form of learning has caused local and state departments of education, teachers, legislators, sociologists, and expert educators to take notice. Their interests and concerns include the topics of diminishing jobs for teachers, compulsory education laws (Lines, 1982, 1983: Whitehead & Bird, 1984; Altman, 1985; Wendel, 1985), less income for school districts, and quality education (Franzosa, 1984) which encompasses the cognitive, affective (Western Australia Department of Education, 1979; Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction [WSSPI],

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1985; Tizard & Hughes, 1984), and psychomotor domains. All of these issues are legitimate in the minds of those who hold them as important. However, the purpose of this paper is not to render quiescent all of the debates regarding the above issues.

Summary Based on Preceding Studies

Characteristics of Home School Families

It is apparent that a wide variety of individuals are involved in home schooling; just as the U.S. is comprised of a pluralistic group. Home school involves: agnostics, Christians, Mormons, five and 17-year-olds, low-and high-income families, Blacks, Orientals, and Caucasians, parents with Ph.D.s and parents with G.E.D.s, and one-child and 10 children families. However, an attempt to normalize the various individuals and their home schooling would generally yield, among others, the following characteristics:

1. Both parents are actively involved; with the mother/homemaker as the teacher most of the time.
2. Parents have attended or graduated from college.
3. Total household income is $20,000-$30,000.
4. Over 60% regularly attend religious services.
5. Three children are in the family.
6. The learning program is flexible and highly individualized, involving both homemade and purchased curriculum materials.
7. Children are formally "schooled" 3-4 hours per day, and often spend extra time in individual learning endeavors.
8. They study a wide range of conventional subjects, with an emphasis on math, reading, and science.
9. The home school is operated for more than two years.
10. Home school is chosen for various reasons, including both cognitive and affective ones.

There is nothing in the research to suggest that home school families, as a group, are bizarre with respect to the characteristics listed above. One trait that is usually implied, and occasionally explicit, in the literature is that the parents who home school their children are extremely interested in and concerned about the total education of their children. In conjunction with this trait, they perceive that they, as parents and guardians, have prime responsibility for the education of their young. "And they are willing to be different,

to take a socially unorthodox route to rearing the kind of children they want" (Divoky, 1983, p. 397).

Learner Outcomes

There have also been at least 11 studies that supply empirical evidence that is directly related to the learner outcomes of home schooling. Perkel (1979) found for low socioeconomic and Spanish speaking four-year-olds that cognitive skill could be increased as well at home as at school. Four-year-olds, of both the working and middle clases, were also studied by researchers in Great Britain. Tizard, Hughes, Pinkerton, and Carmichael (1982) found that significantly more cognitive demands on children were made at home than at school and children asked more questions at home than at school. Tizard, Hughes, Carmichael, and Pinkerton (1983a) found that teachers asked a significantly greater proportion of questions than mothers, and children learned quickly that their role at school was to answer, not ask, questions. Tizard, Hughes, Carmichael, and Pinkerton (1983b) also found, at significant levels, that children more frequently used complex language at home than at school.

Home school students of high school age in Western Australia perfomed satisfactorily on achievement tests (WADE, 1979) and Linden (1983) reported above-average scores on the CAT for children of various grade levels. Hewitt Research Foundation (1986b) consistently finds home school students to score in the 70 and 80 percentiles on standardized achievement tests.

In a study involving a more controlled design, K-8 grade home school children scored above(3%-12%) the national average on the SAT in reading, language, and math (WSSPI, 1985). Youth in a state-managed form of home schooling in Alaska have been scoring significantly higher than conventional schooled youth on the CAT in math, reading, language, and science (ADE, 1984, 1985, 1986; Falle, 1986). The CCS home schooled in Alaska also score higher on achievement tests than conventional schooled Alaskans (ADE, 1985, 1986; Falle, 1986).

Taylor (1986) has provided the only study which carefully examines and offers data regarding the affective component of learning. He found that home school youth scored significantly higher than conventional school youth on the global and all six subscales of the *Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale*.

With respect to cognitive outcomes, then, the evidence suggests that those youth educated in the home school environment will generally do as well or better than their conventional school peers.

The vast majority of home school people score well above average on achievement tests. The evidence in the studies analyzed in this paper is generally reliable. Furthermore, no evidence to the contrary could be found.

Likewise, the available empirical data suggest that home school youth are doing at least as well as those in conventional schools in terms of affective outcomes. Although very limited measured evidence exists regarding the values, attitudes, andd socialization of home school youth, no tangible evidence was identified that they are inferior to conventional school youth in these areas.

The findings regarding home school learner outcomes are thus far based upon pre-experimental (Campbell & Stanley, 1963), causal comparative, and correlational research paradigms. It is difficult, although perhaps not impossible, to start with equivalent samples of youth when involved in an attempt to compare home school and conventional school "treatments." It is possible to hypothesize that the home school treatment is a causal factor of apparently elevated achievement and self-concept scores, but the research to date cannot be said to come close to proving such an hypothesis.

Possible Explanations for Observed Home School Outcomes

A review of the literature suggests that, in general, home school is related to positive or desirable learner outcomes. If this is true, it is interesting and perhaps worthwhile to speculate as to why home school might enhance, or at least not be a detriment to, learner outcomes. Following are some potential explanations:

1. Home school provides an extremely low student:teacher ration, usually 1 to 3:1. This allows for a tremendous amount of child-adult interaction, feedback, and behavior reinforcement in the learning setting.

2. Parents are highly involved in their children's learning, and what happens at home is clearly related to learning success (Keeves, 1975; Travers, 1982; U.S. Department of Education, 1986).

3. Parents are "significant others" to their children, and the children will value their parents' behavior enough to imitate it. Parents who home school place high value on learning and not only value teaching their young but also enthusiastically learn themselves. Extra attention from parents may raise the self-concept of children, which is associated with improved learning. Also, many home schooling parents personally experience a renewal of interst in learning. It may be likely that children will follow the model of their parents in this regard.

4. Some children who are labeled "disadvantaged" (socioeconomically) may actually be benefitted by staying at home for several years rather than going to a conventional school. Tizard and Hughes (1984) concluded, "Far from compensating for any inadequacies of their home, the staff were in fact lowering their expectations and standards for the working-class children" (p. 257). The milieu of the conventional school may often discriminate against lower socioeconomic children. It has been found that higher expectations of youth by adults, perhaps more likely at home for many children, result in greater academic performance by learners (Travers, 1982; U.S. Department of Education, 1986).

5. At home, "...the learning is often embedded in contexts of great meaning to the child" (Tizard & Hughes, 1984, p. 251), and the home schooled are frequently involved in learning within the framework of daily living activities. This setting is similar to some aspects of the quality, educative experiences and "learning by doing" that Dewey (1938) encouraged and the active involvement in learning by discovery that Piaget and Bruner have emphasized (Carin & Sund, 1985).

6. Home school lends itself to a high degree of individualization and flexibility in terms of "curriculum" for each student. The unique characteristics of each child, whether a deficit or an asset compared to the norm, can be addressed and dealt with on a daily basis without the hindrances of institutional life and operations. Even if the average home school child spends as much as three hours in "formal" or planned learning activities, he or she is still afforded four or five more hours of the conventional school day to engage in a great variety of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning activities (Reynolds & Williams, 1985; Gustavsen, 1981; Linden, 1983).

7. Parents at home frequently exhibit behaviors that have consistently appeared in the literature on teacher effectiveness. Among these characteristics of effective teachers are (a) teacher variability, viz. the parents use many different methods to teach their children, (b) enthusiasm, (c) task orientation, viz. once the learner is on a task, they have him or her take the time to complete it; which is what many home schoolers find they are able to do with their flexible schedules, and (d) clarity and organization in instruction to the student; which is perhaps easier for home school teachers since they have so few students (Medley, 1982; T.P. Evans, personal communication, April 30, 1984). Each of the preceding seven ideas concerning the apparent desirable learner outcomes of home school

could entail a lengthy study in itself. At best, the research regarding home school youth is slight. Nevertheless, should more research be dome regarding this option in U. S. education?

Research Potentials

Stephen Arons (1983), an expert in legal studies, did a careful legal and philosophical analysis of book censorship, home schooling, and educational subcultures in *Compelling belief: The culture of American schooling.* He proposed some provoking questions:

> If a child is in school six hours each day for twelve years merely as a logical result of changes in the social and economic structure over the last 200 years, why do a few thousand families seeking to educate their children at home evoke such virulent official reactions and such widespread public attention? Why is it that millions of children who are pushouts or dropouts amount to business as usual in the public schools, while one family educating a child at home becomes a major threat to universal public education and the survival of democracy? (p. 88)

It would seem that educators, legislators, state departments of education, parents, and others would want more empirical data regarding home schooling before they further laud or denigrate its potentials. The fact that, contrary to Aron's figure, perhaps far more than 50,000 families are presently educating their children at home makes research even more important.

Some of the various suggestions for further research follow:

1. Compare more carefully the academic achievement scores of home and conventional school students (Linden, 1983; Wendel, 1985; Taylor, 1986).
2. Investigate socialization aspects of home school compared to conventional school (Linden, 1983).
3. Develop a profile of the types of programs and materials used by home schoolers (Linden, 1983).
4. Survey attitudes of school administrators (Linden, 1983), certified teachers, education specialists, and the public toward home school.
5. Study the effect of teacher certification of home school teachers (Wendel, 1985) or education courses taken by home school teachers on student achievement.

6. Investigate possible uses of television, computers, and other forms of technology in the home school (Wendel, 1985).

7. Conduct a longitudinal study tracing "...the self-concept of home schooling children both before and subsequent to their re-entry into a conventional school system" (Taylor, 1986, p. 191).

8. Profile the lives of home schooled people after high school graduation age (R. Smith, personal communication, July 1, 1986).

Furthermore, it would be of interest to science educators to have information concerning the scientific development of home school youth. To date, there is scanty information about the achievement of these learners on standardized science tests. The ADE (1985) reported that CCS home school fourth through eleventh grade students scored, on the average, 15.1 percentiles higher (68th to 90th percentile) than their conventional school Alaskan peers on the SRA science test. The only other information on the science achievement of these youth was provided by an anthropologist. M.A. Pitman (personal communication, June 26, 1986) administered the Metropolitan Achievement Test to a small number of home school youth in Ohio, and they scored above average on the science portion of the test. In addition, this author is not aware of any information regarding the scientific literacy (Showalter, 1974; National Science Teachers Association, 1982) of home school learners.

It would be helpful, to home schoolers and to society in general, to (a) determine whether there is a significant relationship between whether a learner is home schooled or conventional schooled and at least one aspect of their scientific literacy and (b) determine whether there is a significant relationship between type of schooling (home or conventional) and scores on science achievement tests.

Among other things, such research might reveal to educators whether more energy should be given to educating parents (Becher, 1982; Moore & Moore, 1986), to "...what professionals can learn from studying parents and children at home" (Tizard & Hughes, 1984, p. 267), or to a more efficient homeostasis of the two. In fact, it might one day be realized by many that perhaps the home schooling movement is

> ...a laboratory for the intensive and long-range study of children's learning and of the ways in which friendly and concerned adults can help them learn. It is a research project, done at no cost, of a kind for which neither the public schools nor the government could afford to pay. (Holt, 1983, p. 393)

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REPRINT

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION NOT DEAD YET, LEADER INSISTS

Herbert Kohl says revival in the cards

by Alan Parachini
LA Times-Washington Post Service

Point Arena, Calif. - When Herbert Kohl wrote *36 Children*, a book that helped shape the alternative education movement of the 1960's, he was a young teacher struggling with fifth graders in the heart of Harlem.

It was a heady time. Kohl and a few other philosophers proposed a massive liberalization of the public education system. "Free" schools and "open" classrooms - part of a revolution in instruction that gave even first graders a say in how they should be taught - soon followed.

Kohl, in fact, coined the term "open classroom" in a book by that name in which he described his prototype for a radically altered public school system. He advocated curriculum reform, even the elimination of curricula, per se. Kohl also favored the new math and the new science and the demise or drastic curtailment of such standard rites of passage as memorizing multiplication tables and learning rules of grammar.

In their place, Kohl called for teaching techniques that pertained to children's everyday lives. For example, fractions might be taught as they related to cooking. Standard reading texts would be replaced by books chosen by the children themselves. Grammar would not be taught as a separate subject but would be absorbed almost intuitively by pupils.

By late 1967, even *Time* magazine had taken note, reporting with some alarm that a sort of left-wing mafia - including Kohl, Jonathan Kozol, Robert Coles, John Holt and Edgar Friedenberg - rampaged in public education. When he saw the article, Kohl recalls, the first thing he did was call the others and suggest they get acquainted.

But that, as they say, was then; this is now.

American schooling today is largely dominated by the terms "back to basics" and the "excellence movement," whose proponents

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range from U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett to California's superintendent of public instruction, Bill Honig.

Alternative education has been in unrelenting retreat for a decade. For all of the publicity that greeted it in the '60's and '70's, many contemporary educators now say that its schools produced an education product little different from their conventional counterparts.

To find Kohl today, a visitor slowly drives through Point Arena, a little coastal village three hours north of San Francisco. The visitor turns onto a back-country road and looks for a white post at the end of a rocky driveway leading into a redwood and pine forest.

Kohl has been here eight or nine years - he's lost track, just as he has of the number of books he's written, which now total, he says, between 15 and 20.

Like Fidel Castro

Figuratively, Kohl sees himself as akin to Fidel Castro in the years in which the future Cuban ruler holed up in the Sierra Maestra of Oriente province, waiting for the right time to overthrow dictator Fulgencio Batista. And as Castro eventually triumphed, Kohl insists that the time for renewal of his revolution may soon be at hand. He predicts a backlash against the conservative education trends of the last decade and a longing for the humanist philosophy that drove the open education revolution of the '60s.

In the meantime, Kohl has neither lost his fire nor tempered his ideology. In recent months he has:

Written a scathing review in *The Nation* of "First Lessons," a booklet by Secretary Bennett that finds American elementary education to be "in pretty good shape." Kohl said he detected in Bennett's reasoning hidden ideological agendas intended to make children's values and outlook conform to conservative politics. It's true, he concedes, that one person's social science is another's propaganda.

Taken on Bennett and Honig for playing roles - albeit different ones - in forcing out of the schools students whose behavior or values may be eccentric by conventional standards. That drift, Kohl has suggested in his own writing and in interviews, may not be unrelated to recent problems with rising youth suicide rates.

"Bennett doesn't say (that you should) teach children to think and challenge," Kohl said. "He wants to produce creative scientists and rigid moralists. You can't do it. Honig falls a little bit for that line, but he's a much more literate person. I've always been pretty much of a maverick."

Late on a recent afternoon, Kohl has returned home from teaching 25 or so children at the Acorn School, an alternative program operated in Point Arena by a parent run collective for the Arena Union Elementary School District. It's a pleasant little school where the children all call Kohl "Herb." He refers to the classroom as "my palette" and says teaching is a form of performance art.

He still faithfully applies the principles he developed.

The movement, he says, took the philosophical position that the traditional authoritarian structure of schools, with students the lowest class, was counterproductive. Moreover, what was taught should be made directly relevant to students' everyday lives. There would be discipline, but it should be developed from within a group of children, not imposed.

"In an authoritarian classroom, annoying behavior is legislated out of existence," Kohl wrote in *The Open Classroom*. "In an open situation, the teacher tries to express what he feels and to deal with each situation as a communal problem. It is important not to equate an open classroom with a 'permissive' environment."

Kohl sits at an old table in his kitchen - a room sheathed in rough redwood planks with a large picture window over the stove that looks out on the forest. He takes a sip of white wine. "I am, by the way," he says, "unambiguously left-wing."

In the 50 years since he was born in New York City, Kohl has taught and done community organizing on educational issues in New York City, and moved to Berkeley for a brief stint on the University of California faculty and a longer period as proprietor of an open high school there. Married to his wife and sometime co-author, Judy, for 25 years, Kohl has raised three children. Two are in high school and one is in college.

Kohl's life, as he recounts it, is an unremitting sequence of intensity and burnout; the pressures of a controversy over control of a community school in New York followed by a year's leave to recharge his batteries in Europe, then Berkeley, followed by a year off in London to recover from the emotional toll of Berkeley politics.

He moved to Point Arena in the late 1970's, partly just to get away but also because he has a sense that his day may yet come again, and that a backwater in Mendocino County may be a better staging area than some urban educational combat zone.

Still a Radical

He is still very much a radical. Of grammar, for instance, he says: "Teaching it is not necessary. What's more important, literacy

should come from spoken language. You should teach people to speak well and to write. In case you want to be a linguist, it's OK to teach grammar, or if a person makes egregious mistakes. But in a formal way, it's a waste of time."

Basic rote skills like memorized multiplication and division may be irrelevant, Kohl still insists, because "most mathematicians use a pocket calculator."

In all, he says, "what's called basic skills is a bunch of very simple, automatic stuff that fills up too much time and plays no role in kids' lives except in the context of school."

Some people contend that the openness in education advocated by Kohl and his kindred spirits in the '60s and '70s is responsible for generally dreary levels of achievement in reading, writing and mathematics among today's young people. To Kohl, there is an irony in that attack. The revolution, he says, was thwarted, blunted and derailed in its time and is now blamed for a failure it didn't cause.

"The open education movement," Kohl observed, "never affected more than 5 percent or 6 percent of the system. When people say (the perceived failure of education to teach fundamental skills) is the fault of openness and progressiveness, the point is it can't be. If they had ever given us a chance to make massive and fundamental change, I would accept the blame if we had failed. But we never had the chance."

Kohl may be ensconced in the redwoods of Mendocino Country but within education and its political power structure, he still excites controversy.

Through a spokesman, Education Secretary Bennett refused to discuss Kohl, saying: "If he (Kohl) ever was influential, it would be a decade or more ago, when goofiness in education was much more in vogue. He's pretty much of a flake."

But Chester Finn, Bennett's assistant secretary for research and development - and the person generally acknowledged as the principal author of Bennett's elementary education white paper - was more expansive.

"Well, there are not a lot of left-wingers who are visible in the field of education, and he (Kohl) is certainly one of the few," Finn said in a telephone interview from Washington. "He's got a few good ideas. An equally satisfactory term would be: 'far out.'"

It's clear there's absolutely no common ground between Kohl and the current U.S. Department of Education. With Honig, there is

something closer to, at least, respect. Honig says he and Kohl don't diverge in basic philosophy much, even though their differences in application and approach are wide.

"This whole idea of giving huge choices to kids without the structure is really disconcerting," Honig said by telephone from Sacramento. "The excellence movement is a certain moral and ethical responsibilities in the sense that it sets standards for things - smoking, or grades or overall expectations.

The Wrong Philosophy

"If you allow kids to smoke in school and not do the work, are you really helping them in their lives? I think that's the philosophy that killed us in the '60s. You need them to be part of the social whole. Honig thinks the 60s 'education mafia' ignored what Honig perceives as a fundamental reality. Children want structure and a lot of the other things Kohl has condemned."

Point Arena's Acorn School is the laboratory Herbert Kohl uses these days. It's a tiny little clapboard structure on the grounds of the one conventional elementary school in the Arena Unified Elementary School District. The interior has been chopped up into a number of tiny rooms and one larger one where about three dozen 5- to 10-year-olds gather, without conventional grade divisions, for collective instruction.

In order to fulfill district requirements, students at Acorn get technical grades at the end of the year and take standardized tests required by the state of California. But generally speaking, Kohl said, he evaluates students' progress more subjectively - in collaboration with the students and their families.

To prove the point that his methods are competitive in the area of basic skills, Kohl called children from the schoolyard - some selected at random by a visiting reporter and commanded them to find a book and read. One by one, they did so, picking works of literature at or above their grade levels. Kohl does not use traditional basic readers, a practice increasingly common in mainstream education as well.

Kohl explains that one of his basic premises is that, in the present educational system, there is little time left for children to act like children. "We want them to be mechanical adults right away," he said. "I resent a lot of things that pass for behavioral or learning objectives.

"'Time on task' is a term they (educators) use a lot right now. These kids are on task right now. They're playing. They're on task for being kids. They're supposed to be children, not miniature adults."

In the kitchen the night before, Kohl had been thinking about how to know when children have achieved skill levels adequate for what they would do with the rest of their lives.

"I wouldn't even call what is happening today a preoccupation with test scores. I would say it is an obsession," Kohl said. "I'm not against standards. I just think there are many ways to achieve them."

He turned to a bookshelf and pulled out two diverse works: an obscure science tome called *Human Diversity* and *Wildwater - the Sierra Club Guide to Kayaking and Whitewater Boating*. *Human Diversity*, he suggested, should be something 12th graders can read and comprehend. *Wildwater* would be a good test for fifth-graders. "My standard," he said of the fifth-grade test, "would be that you can read this and not drown."

It is the kind of remark that makes Bennett and Finn call Kohl flaky, which in turn brings a smile to Kohl's lips. "I am flaky, by the way...really much more so than they think," he said. "Ten years ago, we were called romantics. Our hearts were in the right place and we were most likely wonderful with children, but romantic to believe that fundamental change can take place.

"I think they (Bennett and Finn) are hard edged, hard-nosed and dangerous. To them, it's a matter of business: 'How do we put our dollars in and get the maximum number of kids out?' I wonder about all the kids who don't come out and the kids who do in terms of how they come out."

REPRINT

MOVING FROM "LOGIC" TO BRAIN COMPATIBILITY

Leslie A. Hart
120 Pelham Road, New York 10805

Yogi Berra, of baseball fame, is reputed to have sagely remarked that "you can observe a lot just by looking."

True. Watch some outfielders. As the ball is hit, they estimate where it will come down, and run to that spot or stand still, as called for. Unless the wind is playing tricks, they position themselves with astonishing accuracy. No two balls follow the same path, and the curve is complex: yet the skilled player knows in an instant where it will fall. Somehow his brain effortlessly makes the calculations.

If they were learning outfielding in schools, they would be taught to estimate the velocity in MPH, the angle of elevation in degrees, and the heading as a compass point, and then logically calculate the cathching point. By the time any outfielder did this, of course, the game would be long over. We must assume they just let their brains do the figuring, the quick natural way.

How on earth do we recognize people? A school would no doubt teach us to do it "logically,' first classifying faces in (a) round, (b) oval, (c) long, and (d), none of the above, or perhaps 'ugly.'" The same would be done for build, color of hair, eyes, and skin, manner of moving, and so on. It wouldn't work. If we observe, we see that people can pick those they know out of a thousand strangers at a glance, and can even identify a poor photo of a friend. The brain knows how. It even has a special portion that handles this function, important to human life.

How do you drive a car down a winding road? There is no "logical" way to know how much to turn the wheel to match the road. You estimate, using stored experience of the patterns involved. You get feedback from where the car goes, and adjust. (Watch a driver's hands, and note the hundreds of small corrections constantly being made.)

We have all been brought up to believe that "logic" is respectable and the highest, most admirable level of thinking. But if we observe, we find there is little we do logically (in the sense of Greek-type, linear, step-by-step logic). Whether we create a meal or

masterpiece of sculpture, we likely work in a very confused, murky way. Scientists rarely make a "logical" discovery; almost always luck or accident or serendipity or transfer is the key. (Science began as an *escape* from neat, orderly logic, which then as now usually produces neat, respectable, but quite wrong answers.) Computer programmers work more heuristically than logically. The arts, of course, almost by definition, represent nonlogical approaches. Technology develops bit by bit, over decades to centuries, through accretion.

The Brain Came First

The human brain is not logical. I submit that *no* part of it is logical, despite the endlessly repeated, but unsupported, assertion that the left hemisphere is. We do not understand speech sequentially, for example - we have to shuffle the words around, *extract patterns*, using clues from context and situation, and feedback (much as we do in driving a car along a winding road.)

The brain existed in its very much present form at least 50,000 years ago to the best of our knowledge. "Logic" was not invented till far later, fewer than 5,000 years ago. There is no conceivable way the brain can be "naturally" logical. It attempts logical processing under protest, and usually comes up with garbled answers. We need only observe, a la Yogi, to see that happening.

Schools dote on logic, especially if neat, orderly, sequential, simple, and verbal. The whole class-and-grade structure expresses the notion that children are all alike and can be processed on that basis. Teachers are required to make up tidy, logical lesson plans. Courses are logical.

Reading is one example. It is analyzed into phonics and "subskills," often taught in a sacred sequence - with embarrassingly bad results. Arithmetic, which does embody a logic, is also taught logically in strict sequence, with even worse outcomes. The parts don't become wholes.

Such is the hold that logic has on many formally educated people that they refuse to learn from endless failures. They repeat the logical efforts, perhamps with minor variations, that of course make no real differences.

Brain-Compatible Learning

But, with new understanding of the brain available, at last we begin to get on the right track.

We see that the brain is the organ for learning, and that if we are to educate people we must learn what the human brain is for, and how it came to be, and how it works - probabilistically, intuitively,

building programs by the tens of thousands, extracting patterns from confusion, utilizing feedback. We must see that the brain is really three brains, of different evolutionary ages, each with its own nature, aims, and capabilities!

With this new knowledge, it is possible now to build comprehensive, *brain-based* theories of human learning (not rat learning) that can be applied to instruction. I have suggested Proster Theory as one candidate; perhaps it is now the best known. Such theories promise to bring about enormously better learning outcomes.

The basic concept of having instruction fit the real nature of the brain, rather than trying to make the brain fit the school, opens the doors to recognizing individual differences and learning styles or strategies.

As long as schools assume that the brain is logical and that teaching and organization should be logical, regimentation, too, is logical; and any real individualizing becomes a confession of error - practically a heresy. So the schools give lip service to individual differences but vigorously resist giving up or even modifying much the class-and-grade system that denies differences.

Only as we become familiar with the nature of the human brain (not so much details as the overall structure), can we begin to appreciate fully the huge range of differences in what has been stored in students' brains and the consequent differences in their learning styles.

Schooling no longer can continue in the old traditional ways, I believe. The heat is on schools to produce learning by all students. That calls for scrapping the worship of logic that brings so much failure, and turning to the brain as it is. For educators, students, communities, and our nation, the consequences could prove extremely pleasing.

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ARE WE MYTH-TAKEN ABOUT EDUCATION?

In a column printed in the *Oregonian* (1/28/86), William Raspberry extends the public discussion of education by bringing out the futility of trying to reform our educational system before we arrive at any consensus on the goals or purposes of education.

Our school systems have traditionally operated on the assumption that there was a common, unifying purpose in spite of all the conflicting statements of educationists, politicians and thinkers.

Do schools exist for the good of the individual or for the good of the state? Should we blindly follow the resolution, "What's good for schools is good for everyone?"

By its title, the prestigious study *A Nation at Risk* makes the good of the individual secondary. Just as government exists for the good of the people, don't schools exist for the good of students (who may or may not attend), the good of the parents (who deserve a break) and the general prosperity of the taxpaying public?

As educators analyze the learning process, as they recognize more and more differences in personal learning styles, the less consensus there is on the best way to get to wherever they are supposed to be going.

Raspberry, like most commentators who are products of an educational system that has programmed them to consider education as synonymous with a school system, does not get to the basic question: "Just what is education?"

It is currently fashionable to relate education to thinking. Some would challenge students to think mathematically or scientifically. Some would challenge them to think logically or syllogistically, some to think pluralistically or humanistically, some abstractly or philosophically, some pragmatically or employabilitically, some artistically or creatively, some theologically or Biblically.

The following information is being distributed through LUNO: Learning Unlimited Network of Oregon, by Gene Lehman, 31960 SE Chin St, Boring, OR, 97009.

Programs to promote thinking may pose such futuristic considerations as what to do in a nuclear confrontation. How many teachers dare challenge students to think about the most important, the most immediate question: "What am I doing sitting here in this classroom when I would be happier, perhaps even learning more, some place else?" And if students are free to think and discuss such immediately pertinent questions, should they not also be free to make such a practical application as walking out?

The pervasive belief that school is the best place to learn is followed by an attitude that there is no point in learning unless getting credits, grades or some official recognition.

James Fallows in "The Case Against Credentialism" (*Atlantic*, Dec. '85) finds that the only business where the measure of performance rather than a list of credentials seems to rule is sports. Sports seems to be the only area where participants are always expected to do their best and can always be replaced when someone better is available.

Competitive sports uniquely succeeds in getting everyone to expect that players set unlimited personal and team goals and embrace the training for maximum personal and team development.

On the academic side, schools seem to get hung up on minimum competencies and very limited, measurable goals. Then they try to inflict these uninspiring restrictions onto the sports program, even though most school systems cling for dear life to the coattails of sports.

Although educators are very aware of the limitations, the distortions and the unreliability of any test, school systems seem more and more compelled to adopt universally uniform, mandatory testing programs. The most serious result of such testing is that test scores become the goal of learning. Rather than the end, test scores should be considered as the beginning of learning. Tests should be an evaluation tool to help determine where we are. Rather than limiting our vision, tests should free us to move beyond narrow measurements of potential.

Most educators would probably not object to defining education as "The development of one's personal potential to the maximum," but then they would almost [always interrupt the process in actual practice.

History is filled with inspiring examples of people who reached great heights by refusing to accept personal limitations and by challenging all institutional controls. We have countless examples

from art, entertainment, technology and business that the most spectacular developments can quickly become institutionalized into deadening, copycat routines.

As long as we consider school systems as synonymous with education, we will never be free to explore the mysteries of learning. As long as we rely on schools or other institutions to resolve the problems that can only be camouflaged by institutionalization, we will never be free to learn.

Gene Lehman 2/1/86

REVIEW

Home Education Magazine
Growing Without Schooling
Rethinking Schools
Holistic Education Review
National Coalition of
Alternative Community Schools News
Lib Ed
(Addresses for subscriptions listed at the end of the article.)

I have been reading from each of these magazines to glean a brief comparison of these different magazines/journals that are coming from the core of the educational alternative community. The similarities of purpose and scope of these magazines, that of airing and addressing the needs, ideas and concerns of people involved with alternatives to stagnant public schooling, outweigh the differences. In reading through a couple of issues of each of these magazines, I was impressed with the depth and breadth of topics that were covered. And yet there is something that each one of them adds to an inquiry into an overall perspective on this subject of learning which is unique. Having said that, let me speak a little about each one.

Home Education Magazine is an excellent resource primarily geared for homeschoolers, but in my opinion for anyone who is open to learning as an innate sharing, loving, pulsing, *alive* and mutual experience. As a parent and a teacher, I found it rich with connections, ideas of great things to do, book reviews, letters, articles and editorials that offer the larger perspective on learning and education which I lose sometimes in the day-to-day teaching and parenting that I do. There is a large, annotated Resources section and many letters from homeschooling kids and adults that share very personally the joys and the worries involved. One unique part of *Home Education Magazine* is the section called "Kids' Pages" with very specific projects, connections (the World Youth Video Exchange), Jokes and Riddles, Trivia Quiz and other features to read and/or do with your kids. Great reading!

Growing Without Schooling is also mostly for homeschoolers, but has a different format from that of *Home Education Magazine*. The best way I can describe it is that it is *very* interactive - almost entirely letters from homeschoolers in response to previous letters or for sharing with readers. It is a real linkage newsletter - very personal

and immediate, some articles from other publications, all the correspondence clustered into general categories in the index on the cover and just packed with experiences! It also has an order form for the wonderful resources available from "John Holt's Book and Music Store" and a comprehensive directory of subscribers (i.e. a lot of other homeschoolers) that is kept right up-to-date. This is a real networker as well as being deeply committed to John Holt's vision about learning.

Rethinking Schools is a journal for teachers, parents and students to voice their concerns about the Milwaukee area public school system. I want to quote from its stated goals because it is in looking at these that I see value for many of us all around the U.S. and internationally.

"We encourage our readers to join us in our discussions and debate on educational issues, including the following:

1) How can parents, teachers and students gain more powerful roles in determining school policies and practices?

2) What must be done to overcome the significant racial, gender and class inequities which prevent many students from receiving an equal and effective education?

3) What specific approaches can teachers use to empower students within the classroom and the community? How can we make meaningful community based work experience an integral part of each child's education?

4) What can we do to insure that multi-cultural and anti-racist education takes place?

5) What creative and peaceful methods can we use to resolve conflicts among students, and conflicts between students and teachers?

6) What specific teaching techniques and materials have proven successful in our efforts to motivate students?

The issue of the journal that I read had excellent articles concerning racial inequities in school curriculum and attitude. The lead article was called, "Toward a Vision of Curriculum that Builds on Students' Strengths" - and there were many following articles sharing the innovative, intuitive and open ideas of teachers who are clearly "going for it!" It was beautiful reading their stories! The issue also included an annotated bibliography of American Indian literature, a student page of prose and poetry, and some wonderful tongue-in-cheek cartoons. Again, this journal adds another facet to a whole perspective on education and learning.

The NCACS News is a networker like *GWS* with articles mostly covering activities and events specific to the coalition. It has news from all around the States and the world as more members explore, and more countries find out about the coalition. The articles come from students and adults. It has necessary notes and agendas from conferences, board meetings and office info, as well as letters and a column for people looking for teachers or jobs in alternative/free school settings. The international connections that have been happening and reported on in *The NCACS News* are what I see as unique here - the last issue reported from Japan, France, Australia, Mexico; and Editor Rosalie Bianchi* reports that she has gotten correspondence from Zimbabwe, Africa!

Lib Ed, a British magazine for "the liberation of learning" is not just about schooling. It is an in-depth look at the struggles in England for less coercion, authoritarianism and elitism in education. The magazine is 21 years old, written by a collective, and obviously is a necessary voice in England, judging from what I read about some of the proposals about education that are being put forward by the present government. There is a great deal in *Lib Ed* that spoke to the "-isms" - racism, sexism, classism. Some of the articles I had trouble relating to because they seemed so theoretical and heady, but my difficulty may be lack of a historical perspective on their different culture. The magazine has some wonderful reviews of alternative schools and programs, a great resource section, and book reviews.

Finally, *Holistic Education Review* is a new and fantastic journal with articles that look whole-heartedly at "holistic education." While I had never used that term, I certainly have been a part of the process that is described in one of the articles I read:

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* who is also a long-time teacher at The Free School in Albany!

"...The focus of holistic education is on relationships - the relationship between linear thinking and intuition, the relationship between mind and body, the relationships between various domains of knowledge, the relationship between self and Self. In the holistic curriculum the student examines these relationships so that he/she gains both an awareness of them and the skills necessary to transform the relationships where it is appropriate." (page 11, Vol. 1, No. 2)

Many of the articles look at the relationship of education and educational models to society and then seem to follow the pulse that I see as so necessary in real education - the pulse that goes between teacher and student, that flows within teachers as individuals and that flows within students/young people as individuals. (I have trouble with the label "student" as applied to those between the ages of 2 and 18, because the essence here is that we are all students! But for lack of a better word...). There are articles from schools that are models of holistic education, there is analysis of terms such as "success," "freedom" and "alternative" - and there are book reviews. This is excellent, thought-provoking reading for individuals and groups.

Reading in all of these gave me food for thought in a big way and also returned me to the feeling that we have a great deal of experience and questioning to share with each other, and in that sharing, we can grow, change, return and continue to renew ourselves.

Holistic Education Review, P.O. Box 1476, Greenfield, MA. 01302-9971
Lib Ed, The Libertarian Education Collective, The Cottage, The Green, Leire, Leicestershire, LE17 5HL England
National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools News, R.D. 1, Box 378, Glenmoore, PA. 19343
Rethinking Schools P.O. Box 93371, Milwaukee, WI 53202
Growing Without Schooling 729 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02116
Home Education Magazine P.O. Box 1083, Tonasket, WA 98855

Reviewer, Betsy Mercogliano
Teacher at The Free School

REVIEW

*BARRIERS TO EXCELLENCE: Our Children at Risk. *Board of Inquiry, National Coalition of Advocates for Students (76 Summer Street #350, Boston, MA 02110). 162pp. $5.50*
MAKE SOMETHING HAPPEN: Hispanics and Urban High School Reform. *National Commission on Secondary Education for Hispanics. Hispanic Policy Developement Project (1001 Connecticut Avenue N.W., Suite 310, Washington, DC 20036). 163 pp. No charge.*

Reviewed by David K. Cohen

The last four years have seen a rising tide of criticism of American high schools. This is nothing new. High schools have been under attack for one shortcoming or another since the early 1950s': slipping in the science race with the Russians; delaying desegregation; denying equal opportunity to Hispanics, women and handicapped students; freezing the First Amendment rights of politically active students and faculty; allowing test scores to decline. But in one respect the recent criticism is a little unusual, for most of it focuses on the quality of academic work. Academic quality has not been high on reformers' lists since the 1950s', when Arthur Bestor, James Conant and Adm. Hyman Rickover drew a bead on the deficiencies of secondary education.

The recent critiques are a mixed bag. They are strong on quantity: never have so many groups issued so many rebukes to high-school educators at one time. Literally hundreds of reports have been published, studying and criticizing the schools' performance and suggesting many changes in public education. States and localities are pushing ahead with the recommended changes, and a cottage industry of reports and studies on the reports has sprung up. But if the quantity of criticism is new, the general drift of reform proposals is not. They too focus on quantity, chiefly the quantity of academic requirements. Reformers want to boost the number of science courses necessary for graduation, bring back more math and foreign language requirements and the like. This approach to quality - what one scholar termed the "remote control" of education - is hardly new; state education agencies and pressure groups have been at it ever since high-school attendance began to boom late in the nineteenth

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century. All through the first four decades of the twentieth century, state governments tried to regulate curriculum content and quality by adding, subtracting or modifying course and graduation requirements for high schools.

Most states continued this habit after World War II. Science and foreign language requirements were strengthened in the 1950s. In the 1960s and 1970s they wre relaxed or relinquished, while different ones were added: requirements for equal treatment of minorities or more help for low achievers. The recent reform efforts thus continue an old tradition of state intervention.

Some worries about such an approach to reform would be predictable in any epoch. Quantity is an uncertain and often misleading index of quality, especially in such subtle matters as cultivation of the mind. And laying on legal requirements can be a cheap substitute for more thoughtful, time-consuming and costly efforts to cultivate intellectual quality in local schools. Other worries are more specific to our own time. The current enthusiasm for high school reform stems in part from several decades of accumulating hostility to the egalitarian reforms of the 1960s and to their presumed deleterious educational consequences. Partisans of egalitarian reform have worried that the current enthusiasm for quality will erode earlier gains for equality.

The two reports considered here arise partly from such worries. They seek to reform the conversation about school reform by calling attention to the continuing educational problems of racial minorities and other disadvantaged groups. They point out, for instance, the appalling dropout rates for Hispanic and black high-school students, rates which sometimes reach 60 to 70 percent. They call attention to the educational damage that can be done by academic tracking within high schools. They worry about the educational losses for disadvantaged and disabled students that follow on cuts in Federal education programs. They remind us that the decade of egalitarian school reform that began with Lyndon Johnson's presidency was but a brief reversal of long established habits of discrimination and neglect. And they argue that unless America continues strenuous efforts to reverse those old habits, the current campaign to improve educational quality will, by design or default, increase the educational gap between students from advantaged and ambitious families and those from families that are poor, neglected and lacking hope.

If these two reports had done nothing else, they would deserve our sympathetic attention. They make a serious and

thoughtful effort to change the direction of current debate and action concerning public schools. They tell us nothing that is new about the educational problems of minority and disadvantaged students, but their message is no less important for being familiar.

Two things are new about these reports, though, and each deserves a bit of thought. One is that they argue for egalitarian school reform more than a decade after the end of America's only serious effort at such reform. How do these advocates of more equality cope with what we have learned since then about the effects and difficulties of such reform? Another novelty is that both reports argue for egalitarian school reform at a time when the economy is not working in the ways that liberals have come to expect. Unemployment is high, at least by 1960s standards, and unemployment among the young is very high - 40 to 50 percent for minority youth in many cities. What is more, most new jobs are found in low-skill service work, not in skilled or even semiskilled manufacturing, let alone in high-skill enterprises. How does one argue for better high-school education for the poor and otherwise disadvantaged when the prospects for work are so disheartening?

Liberal reformers did not have to worry about such nasty economic issues in the salad days of school reform. For one thing, most 1960s educational reform focused on the elementary schools or on preschool children, and unlike high-school students, graduates of elementary schools don't go on to work. With a few exceptions they go on to high school, and this relieved reformers of serious pressure to think hard about the connections between school and work - or about what the lack of such, connections might imply for schools and students. For another thing, in the mid-1960s the economy was not malfunctioning as badly as it is now. It looked as though there were plenty of places for qualified applicants, whether at work or in college, and reformers were free to concentrate on helping poor and minority students get their fair share of qualifications and places.

But by now, if liberal reformers want to argue for their favorite policies they must do so in economic circumstances that seem likely to defeat those policies.

What are egalitarian reformers to make of such developments? How can they press forceful arguments for liberal school reform when economic change seems to be narrowing disadvantaged students' prospects?

There is no way to avoid this dilemma. It is one of the persistent puzzles that confronts anyone who is troubled enough by

inequality to set down ideas for reducting it. The authors of *Barriers to Excellence* follow a timeworn strategy in managing this dilemma, though. They simply ignore it. Like many who have gone before, they therefore appear to come down on both sides of the problem.

[They ask] "rhetorically, why we should bother to invest public resources in programs for poor and minority children." And they answer, in good old-fashioned American style, that such investments make sense because they pay off in dollars.

One can think of several grounds on which to question these assertions, but the one that fairly begs for mention is consistency. Only a few short chapters later the report presents the dismal economic forecasts that I discussed. It takes no great economic insight to see that if the economy goes the way the authors fear, these presumed benefits of social program investment would not materialize.

Finally, the report doubles back on all of these economic tacks. The conclusion of the chapter on economic issues records the commission's "growing concern" during its inquiry "about the emphasis on materialistic motives...for education reform." There are various versions of the doctrine that lies behind this concern. One is that good education can be justified by reference to the development of humanity's most distinctive capacities. Another is that critical intelligence is desirable in a political democracy, without considering its economic benefits. Such justifications seem quite appealing, even convincing. But two objections are worth entering. One is the modest matter of consistency: the report again seems to come down on all sides of economic arguments about education, supporting several as well as opposing them all.

It is a fair bet that this report will not effect a mass conversion to a more elevated view. And it therefore seems likely that if schools are unable to deliver on their longstanding promise of economic rewards, many students will defect - either from school or just from their studies. There is some evidence that this is part of the reason that so many students, poor and minority kids chief among them, don't try harder in high school now. They know that the odds for economic payoff are poor, and being good Americans, they see no other, purer reasons to bury their noses in books.

This materialism - which is sometimes called anti-intellectualism - helps to explain why there is so little studying and so much dull or even awful teaching in so many American high schools. It also helps to explain why more high-minded approaches to

But if the two documents push ideas that we identify with the 1960s, they do it with a difference. Both stress academic quality to a degree unknown in the 1960s. The report on Hispanic students argues that "a core curriculum with clearly defined academic standards must be established for *all* students," and that "excellence must be a national goal." It also tries to defuse the politically touchy problem of bilingual education. It stresses that all Hispanic students must learn English, and presses for more effective English teaching.

The National Commission on Secondary Education for Hispanics stresses a point that has been virtually ignored in the criticism of high schools thus far: that care for and commitment to students is an essential part of making serious academic demands. The commission is not rehashing pop psychology here but commenting sensibly on the realities of life and school for most Hispanic kids. More than half of all Puerto Rican children in the United States live in single-parent households, mostly headed by women. They are often poor, and most Hispanic children live on streets shadowed by drugs, prostitution and crime. These kids are "beleaguered." If their schools took them seriously, if they created "an atmosphere of mutual respect and dignity," these students might have a chance. Care and commitment include an appreciation of the unique problems that many Hispanic students face, but they do not include academic slacking. This report calls for "high expectations for teachers and students" precisely on the ground that such expectations help to communicate the sense of mutual respect and dignity that makes for good education.

In an extended critique of both schools and the current reform movement, they point out that most teaching in high schools is mindless. "Current teaching practices emphasize the passivity of the learner....Teachers lecture or pass out worksheets. Students listen or fill in blanks. [There is] little interaction or engagement....The focus is on topics rather than concepts. Subjects are covered; little is uncovered or mastered." In this fragmented academic world, more requirements probably will just intensify the mechanical quality of life and learning. The extant arrangements shield students and teachers from engagement with one another and with their studies.

But two large problems remain. *Barriers* criticizes "fragmentation and anonymity" in high schools, but it pushes hard for more special programs. Programs for disabled students, for pregnant students, programs to eliminate cultural discrimination, programs to eliminate sex discrimination and more. Each of these is a worthy

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cause, and all, taken together, are a worthy agenda. But one legacy of the late 1960s and early 1970s programs of this sort was that they further fragmented curriculum and teaching in public high schools.

The author of *Barriers* argue thoughtfully and well for more special programs and for less fragmentation in the curriculum. But they give no sign of realizing that, as high schools are currently organized, more special programs will produce more fragmentation.

This is a serious flaw, not only in the program that is advanced in *Barriers to Excellence* but in the liberal agenda for school reform. The authors of both reports took a giant step in the right direction by recognizing the problems of fragmentation and mindless teaching. But several more steps will be needed if the centrifugal forces associated with various special programs are to be balanced by a more coherent and unified organization of high-school studies.

The other problem, even more troublesome for liberals, arises from the notion, asserted in *Barriers to Excellence*, that "students want to learn...[but that] the day-to-day routine of many schools obscures this simple fact." Both reports are correct in arguing that one of the public schools' most appalling failures is their failure to expect good work from many students. And they are correct in arguing for reforms that would replace neglect with serious demands and substantial expectiations.

Still, it is misleading to say that students want to learn but are kept from doing so by schools. Even in the best high schools there are numbers of students who simply don't want to learn what schools have to teach. Schools cannot do everything well. They cannot "meet everyone's needs" any more than they can get everyone to achieve above the mean.

This is not just a quibble. Schools' past efforts to be all things to all people have led them into many difficulties. The thin and often flatulent character of high-school studies is the result of an old historical alliance between reformers' passion to press more and more social problems on schools and educators' self-serving embrace of the doctrine that more schooling is the best medicine for every person and any problem. One result had been a population - of students, teachers and parents - that has little sense of the sort of thoughtful, intellectually demanding study that the authors of these reports want. This result of secondary education is probably the greatest barrier to its improvement. Probably the next most serious barrier is colleges and universities that fail to provide thoughtful and demanding studies for students who are able and willing to take up teaching as a career.

But further down the list there is yet another barrier - the notion that students want to learn but are frustrated by schools. Certainly all students want to learn lots of things, and certainly many are frustrated by schools. But much of what most students want to learn has no place in schools, and some students don't want to learn any of the things that schools properly can teach. Or they don't want to learn those things when law and convention decree that youngsters must study. For these and other reasons, school will not be a hospitable place for all students, especially all late adolescents. Some students will not add anything to their schools. Some will subtract.

It probably is an affront to inherited liberal ideas, but high schools will never be able to do justice to most students if Americans cannot invent constructive and fair alternatives for those youths for whom a few more years of school is too little, too much or not right just then. There is no shortage of worthy ideas.

National youth service, a lower school leaving age coupled with lifelong education entitlements, work apprenticeship programs and on-the-job schooling programs are a few. These are not sops for minorities or the underclass. Most of the ill-served high-school students are white and not poor, though poor and minority kids get more than their fair share of lousy teaching.

No school can promote quality teaching and learning when an appreciable minority of students or teachers defect from those aims. The greater the defection, the more the institution must turn to compulsion or compromise to manage the dissent. Either solution compromises quality and commitment for other students and teachers. Both are mortal enemies of good education. Liberals need to find ways to affirm society's obligations to all youth without placing the whole load on schools.

March 26, 1988

Dear Mary,

In the last issue of the Newsletter and *SKOLE* there have been articles by Dan Greenberg, and I must finally take issue with him in his assertion that only Sudbury Valley School does things for and with students the way they should be done. Are they really the only school in existence which operates under democratic principles? No they're not. The rest of us may not adhere to their particular style, but there are many schools which are truly democratic and participant controlled.

If Dan goes to the NCACS Conference I'll surely take this issue up with him there and perhaps we can begin a dialogue. But if he does not, I would like to encourage other schools to respond to his claim. Sudbury Valley may be a wonderful school, but that does not mean that there are not many other schools which are equally wonderful and meaningful to the people who make up their communities.

I don't know if I want to be angry with him or sorry for him because he is so blind to this possibility.

I hope you're well and enjoying the coming of spring as much as I am.

Love and best wishes,

Sandy Hurst
UPATTINAS SCHOOL Open Community Corp.
Past President of NCACS

Dear Mary Leue,
The winter issue of *SKOLE* was very impressive and challenging. I'm enclosing $30. for a network sub. and a copy of letter to Dave Lehman. I hope we can work out a computerized linkup soon.

Dear Dave,

I fully share the concerns you expressed about adolescence in *SKOLE* (w' 87).

While teaching high school English, I lacked the temperament, conviction and energy for enforcing control so I quickly fell back on challenging students to accept personal responsibility for their own learning and behavior.

I am especially interested in your call to give students more real-life work experience. I think alternative schools should capitalize on what they do best: educate. Although it may sound crudely commercial, I think alt. schools should develop marketable packages that can be offered as more than just samples to the general public, schools or businesses.

Since there is great concern about the level of basic language skills and since basic skills are the key to becoming an independent learner, I think there is an unlimited potential for programs that break away from the traditional school practice of imposing group-structured programs, with only token regard to individual levels, temperament, background and learning styles.

Through LUNO - Learning Unlimited Network of Oregon - I am offering all the resources of my *Phonetic Spelling Lab* and whatever else I find educationally challenging to any alternative schools.

I will supply material to any who are interested in helping test, develop, package, produce, promote or market material and programs. All participants will be free to proceed in whatever way they choose. I trust that all technical and financial details can be worked out on a mutually beneficial basis.

Gene Lehman

APPENDIX:

SUMMERHILL REVISITED THROUGH THE CAMERA EYE OF JOSHUA POPENOE'S *INSIDE SUMMERHILL*, 1970

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ΣΚΟΛΕ

the journal of the
National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools

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SUMMER, 1989 VOL. V, NO. 1

ΣΚΟΛΕ appears twice a year. It publishes articles related to the subject of alternatives or innovations in education, critiques of other forms of education, theoretical considerations associated with schools, schooling, learning and teaching, as well as accounts of individual schools themselves and "how-to" articles. We welcome manuscripts by educators, interested by-standers, parents and thoughtful students of all ages. Interesting photographs showing activities connected with learning/teaching are also welcome, but will not be returned except under very unusual circumstances.

Material to be submitted for publication must be received by the December 31 and June 31 deadlines. Manuscripts will not be returned unless extreme emotional blackmail has been practiced by the author, and should be typed with nice black type. Send your manuscripts to Mary Leue, 20 Elm St., Albany NY 12202.

Inquiries concerning membership in NCACS (the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools) or subscription rates to either ΣΚΟΛΕ or the National Coalition Newsletter should be addressed to Michael Traugot, NCACS National Office, 58 Schooltown Rd., Summertown, TN 38483. Back issues of ΣΚΟΛΕ may be ordered from Mary Leue at the above address, at $3.00 a copy.

ΣΚΟΛΕ

Volume V, No. 1 Summer, 1989.

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ALBANY, NEW YORK, 1989

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

Well, we finally broke down at bought a Mac plus and a Laserwriter printed - at the "educators'" discount, of course. Now perhaps we'll be able to get this instrument off the ground on time! Hang in, subscribers. We'll make it yet! It is a lovesome thing, God wot, to quote some Elizabethan poet or other, is it not.

Our last issue featured Summerhill, in Joshua Popenoe's marvelous pictures. Our intent was to stress the heritage alternative schools share in honoring the philosophy of A.S. Neill, its most eloquent spokesman perhaps being Dan Greenberg - at least, in the emphasis he places on democracy in schools. Of course he is right! As was Neill. And having said as much, we are still left with the unanswered question: Right - now how do we manage to export our product - democracy - to the masses who never had it, wouldn't be either able or willing to abide by its implications, and are not at all likely ever to benefit by it! H.G. Wells' *Joan and Peter* expresses very eloquently the dilemma faced by a titular democracy in attempting to educate its citizens *for* democracy. In view of the fact that societies create the schools which mirror their inner beliefs, how can you bring them from where they are to where they might need to be, if they won't opt for the change in the direction of more democratic ways? Well, one way is to set up alternatives which actually work in doing the job, as Neill and Dan and Hannah and a few others have done. The issue of the relevance of these tiny oases in the vast desert of undemocratic institutions surrounding them remains unaddressed by this approach, right as it may be.

Your managing editor is just back from six weeks in India, and was struck by the inapplicability of the ideal of

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charity toward the poor in that country. I literally might not have made it back to the oasis of America if I had not instinctively understood my need for protection against the aggressive insistence of beggars for my possessions, and, symbolically, at least, my very life! See my poem *Mandi Bus Station* for one such encounter which ended poignantly but without psychic scars on either side - there were others from which I did get off so easily. In the face of such a mass reality, it takes a Gandhi to address this issue on terms that work! His living belief in *sarvodaya* - the understanding that one is no better off than the "lowest" of the earth; his term "*Harijan*" - "children of God" - for the Untouchables; his total willingness to *live* his beliefs - this is what it takes to resolve the dilemma, I am quite convinced! And on this issue we Americans are only now beginning to make a bit of headway.

So this issue features "another part of the forest," as it were, from the Summerhillian voluntarism doctrine - the issue of the education we owe to the children of the poor and the rejected in our society *as a democracy*, and how we get from from where we are as a people to where we need to be. The issue profiles the New York City area public schools that are doing such a monumental job of finally addressing educational processes on a human level. In particular, it highlights the work done by Deborah Meier, principal of Central Park East Secondary School, whose work is backed up by and commented on by educator Ted Sizer (*Horace's Compromise*) in the following article, both articles reprinted from *Phi Delta Kappan*, with thanks.

I shall be very interested to read subscribers' comments, particularly in the light of the ideological idealists (on the topic of 100% educational voluntarism in our midst. Or is that an offensive characterization? It's meant to be provocative, but my purpose is not to offend. I would call your attention to the series of letters in **LETTERS** dealing with this issue of democracy in schools. My intent is not to knock the whole thing when I offer these public alternatives as worthy of serious consideration.

I hope you get as excited as I did, reading Dave Lehman's article on the Indian roots of the American constitution. I had discovered this issue when "our" Chris went to the Cornell conference on the subject, but having the article for SKOLE is very heartening to me. I put Dave's letter with his article so you could see the context - also Charlotte Landvoigt's letter with her article on teaching philosophy to kids, for the same reason.

Gene Lehman's remarks on education are included because they are so relevant - and short, to boot. I have also included an article on the history of alternative education (Whaddya Mean, Free?) which I wrote for Ron Miller's and Mary Sweeney's new periodical *Holistic Education Review* (which has just received an award for the issue they put out on alternative education - yay, R & M!) and am reprinting with their kind permission. I hope it may remind people of the history of alternative schools and of the fact that many of the ways organizations (yes, even us) develop of doing things come out of their history far more than out of any more sensible reason.

Gunnar Myrdahl once said of national governments (I suspect it may pertain as much to voluntary organizations and other human groupings as it does to formal governments) that it sometimes seemed to him as though the

rule of thumb they appeared to operate by was, the more a policy failed to solve a problem, the more intensively it ought to be implemented! - as though that would somehow make it work!

Applying Myrdahl's comment to our organization may strike readers as a kind of "in" remark on the hassles we have been through as a national organization, but hey - most of you subscribers are members. Anyhow, we're getting through it. Write us a letter if you want (don't want) more about organizational conflict to be aired in *ΣΚΟΛΕ*.

Rudyard Kipling's poem was also lifted from Gene Lehman's *LUNO*, for which (also), Gene, many thanks. Oh - and I hear we also got a fine writeup in *TRANET*, Bill Ellis' networking periodical from Rangeley, Maine. Thanks, Bill.

CENTRAL PARK EAST SECONDARY SCHOOL

AN ALTERNATIVE PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL

A COOPERATIVE PROJECT OF
COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT 4
NEW YORK CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION
THE COALITION OF ESSENTIAL SCHOOLS

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PROFILE

CENTRAL PARK EAST SECONDARY SCHOOL
WHERE KIDS ARE FOUND - AND NOT LOST!

(from the CPESS brochure)

Dear Prospective Students and Families,

"These are the best years of your life." Grownups often say that to teenagers. But is it true? Many kids don't think so! Adolescence can be a pretty rocky time and school can be the most difficult part of it.

During the high school years, it's easy to feel you don't "belong." It's easy to get lost - and kids do. It's easy to get bored - and kids do. It's easy to lose sight of what purpose going to school serves - and kids do. But most of them keep on going, anyway partly because it is the only place kids can find other kids, partly because they believe it will help them in the long run, even if they are not sure how. So they "stick it out," hoping for a better future.

That scarcely adds up to "the best years of your life" - which is why we started Central Park East Secondary School (CPESS) in 1985. CPESS is an alternative school, a place parents and kids choose because we do things differently. Central Park East Elementary has been going for 12 years we know it works, and works well, but there was nowhere like it for high school students. Now there is.

What kind of school is Central Park East Secondary School? It is a school where learning is exciting - for ***everyone***, students and staff. A place where ***all*** the staff are well-educated, highly qualified and committed. Where no kid can get lost. Where we all keep asking ourselves: "Why are we doing what we are doing? Are we doing it well? Could we do it better?" And it's a place that provides kids with a good "here and now" while it prepares them to face

the future with strength and skill.

Most of all, it's a place with an answer to the question kids ask so often: "Who cares?" The answer at CPESS is "***EVERYONE.***" Staff, kids, families. We care about each other, and we care about education.

That's the most important requirement for being a part of CPESS. You have to care.

Sincerely,
Deborah Meier
Director
Herb Rosenfeld
Assistant Director

THE PURPOSE

Central Park East Secondary School, an alternative high school, expands on the successful learning environment created at Central Park East Elementary School over the last 12 years. The secondary school is a cooperative project of Community School District #4, the New York City Board of Education,and the Coalition of the Central Schools.

CPESS was started in the fall of 1985. The school will have about 225 students in 1987-1988 in grades 7-9. Another grade will be added each year until 1990-91, when the school will enroll a total of 500 students in grades 7-12. The fundamental aim of CPESS is to teach students to use their minds well, to prepare them for a well-lived life that is productive, socially useful and personally satisfying. The school offers an academic program that stresses intellectual achievement. Mastery of a limited number of centrally important subjects is emphasized. This goes hand in hand with an approach that emphasizes learning how to learn, how to reason, and how to investigate complex issues that require collaboration and personal responsibility.

The final high school diploma is not based on time spent

in class, but on a clear demonstration that the goals of the school have been met. The school's values include high expectations, trust, a sense of personal decency, and respect for diversity. The school is open to all, and expects a lot from each.

The school is guided by the principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools, a national organization of 12 public and private high schools directed by Brown University Education Dean Theodore Sizer. These principles include:

1. **Less is more:** It is more important to know some things well than to know many things superficially.

2. **Personalization:** Although the course of study is unified and universal, teaching and learning is personalized. ***No teacher is responsible for teaching more than 80 students, or for advising more than 15.***

3. **Goal-Setting:** High standards are set for all students. Students must clearly exhibit mastery of their school work.

4. **Student-as-Worker:** Teachers at CPESS "coach" students, encouraging students to find answers and too, in effect, teach themselves. Thus, students *discover* answers and solutions, and ***learn by doing*** rather than by simply memorizing what others have discovered.

THE PROGRAM

The Curriculum

CPESS offers a common core curriculum for all students in grades 7-12, organized around two major fields: Mathematics/Science for half the school day, and Humanities (art, history, social studies and literature) for the other half. Every effort is made to integrate academic disciplines, so that students recognize and understand the interrelationships between different subjects of study. The communication skills of writing and public speaking are taught in all subjects by all staff.

At the end of 10th grade, students enter the Senior Institute. Each student's Graduation Committee, made up of the student, the family, and the advisor, draw up a personal program of study designed to prepare the student for graduation, and for college and the work world. The unifying core of the Senior Institute is a seminar on the books and ideas that have shaped our civilization.

Teaching Approach

The organization and scheduling of the curriculum allow for maximum flexibility. Each team of teachers offers a variety of styles of teaching, including group presentations, smaller seminars, one-on-one coaching, and independent work in the art studios, science labs, and library.

Class Size

The maximum class size is 18 students. We believe that small classes enable students to explore their interests, to feel free to ask questions and make mistakes, and to learn in a supportive environment.

Small class size provides us with the means to tailor learning programs to the individual needs of each student. Students are not identical in their learning style, pace, or skills, and CPESS offers the flexibility for different ways of working and learning. But the same standards - mastering important academic and intellectual skills and subjects - are held for all.

The Electives

Electives are offered before and after the mandated school day. Spanish is offered in the morning, and sports, dance, computer, music, and studio art are offered in the afternoon.

The Advisory System

The advisory system assists students in decision making, academic planning, and interpersonal skills. Each student has a faculty advisor and belongs to an advisory group of no more than 15 students. The group meets every day for quiet reading/writing/study, for discussions of social and ethical

issues and current events, and for individual conferences with the advisor.

"Houses"

The school is divided into houses of 75 students. Each house has its own faculty of full-time teachers with diverse academic specialties. Grades 7/8 are grouped together, as are grades 9/10. The houses give students the opportunity for ongoing interaction with faculty and other students. House meetings are held weekly - in the style of "town meetings" - to give students the sense of active participation in government.

School/Community Service Program

Students at CPESS are part of a larger community. They contribute to that community by spending two hours each week in a service program. Students engage in a wide range of activities, from student teaching to working with senior citizens, from renovating furniture to working in museums, libraries, and other local agencies. These experiences help students develop a sense of responsibility toward others, acquire useful skills, learn about adult occupations, and participate in increasingly more responsible and complex tasks.

THE PEOPLE

When most people think of school, they think of a building. While we are proud of the fine facilities our school building has to offer, at CPESS we think that teachers and students are the school. And it is our people, students, teachers, and families - of whom we are most proud.

Students at CPESS *want* to learn. They recognize the extra academic demands the school requires of them, and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with such high expectations. In fact, acceptance at the school is determined primarily by a student's attitude toward work and responsibility for him/herself and others. We seek students and families who want to be part of such a school, who

understand its demands and who are prepared to undertake the added obligations.

The staff at CPESS is a highly talented group of individuals who have made a commitment to the development of each and every student. Teachers at CPESS are not only experts in their subjects but are dedicated to their students and the entire school community; each teacher serves in the - capacity of advisor to 15 students.

We view teachers and students as partners in learning. The atmosphere at CPESS stresses *cooperation* rather than *competition*. Students at the school *help* each other learn. This learning process we foster requires the active participation of students in school life, and creates a strong sense of the school as a community.

Families, too, are crucial to the endeavor. The family and CPESS must work closely together to give the student the best education possible.

THE PLACE

Central Park East Secondary School is located at 1573 Madison Avenue near 106th Street. The high school shares a building with the 250 students of CPE I Elementary School, as well as several smaller District #4 programs. The building is open from 8 am to 5 pm. The principal of the building, David Bluford, provides guidance to all the building's schools and programs.

The building, built in the late 1950s, features spacious classrooms, a fine auditorium/theater, a large gym, a lunchroom, and outdoor yards. It is also equipped with art, music, and dance studios, a well-staffed and stocked library, computer and VCR equipment, and a photography studio.

The school is located one block from Central Park, within walking distance of several museums, Mt. Sinai Hospital, and a variety of means of public transportation.

ADMISSIONS

Application to the school is open to all students in New York City who are entering 7th, 8th or 9th grade. No student is admitted after 9th grade.

CPESS students come from many different schools and neighborhoods. The school seeks to be ethnically, racially and economically integrated. To achieve these goals, it will accept applications from students and families regardless of geographic location. However, Central Park East I and II and River East graduates, as well as other District #4 students, have first priority.

Acceptance to the school is primarily determined by a student's attitude toward work and responsibility for him/herself and others. CPESS students must be prepared to face the challenges, and to take advantage, of the educational opportunities offered by the school. The program is academically rigorous and stresses intellectual achievement.

All prospective students are asked to spend a day at the school, in order to evaluate their ability to benefit from CPESS. The application process also includes a review of the student's past record and an interview with the student and the family.

THE PROMISE

At CPESS we make an important promise to every student - one we know we can keep. We promise our students that when they graduate from CPESS, they will have learned to use their minds - and to use their minds well. In every class, in every subject, students will learn to ask and to answer these questions:

1. From whose viewpoint are we seeing or reading or hearing? From what angle or prospective?

2. How do we know what we know? What's the evidence, and how reliable is it?

3. How are things, events or people connected to each other? What is the cause and what the effect? How do they "fit" together?

4. What's new and what's old? Stability and change, tradition and novelty. Have we run across this idea before?

5. So what? Why does it matter? What does it all mean? Who cares?

We are committed to the idea that a diploma is a meaningful piece of paper, not one that says only that the student has "stuck it out" through high school. A CPESS diploma tells the student - and the world - that the student has not only mastered specific fields of study but has also mastered the ability to think critically and to evaluate.

LAA

CENTRAL PARK EAST: AN ALTERNATIVE STORY

By Deborah Meier

If any one school epitomizes the success of choice, it is Central Park East in New York City and the three sister schools that have sprung from it. And yet, says Ms. Meier, what's truly surprising is how few other schools have chosen to break free of the traditional mold.

In the spring of 1991, Central Park East will graduate its first high school students. Some of them will have been with us since they were 4-years old. From age 4 to age 18, they will have attended a school - located in East Harlem in the midst of New York City's District #4 - that many observers believe is as good as any school in the public or the private sector. A progressive school in the tradition of so many of New York's independent private schools, Central Park East is firmly fixed within New York's school bureaucracy. As its founding principal, I remain both ecstatic and amazed. Have we really succeeded?

For most of us on the staff and for many of our parents, well wishers, and friends, the success of Central Park East is a dream come true. A rather fragile dream it has been, tossed by many of the ill winds of this city's tumultuous politics. Today, however, we appear to be sturdier than ever. It would take an unusually strong storm now to uproot us or break us - or even to bend us very much. We are surrounded by a lot of people - within the district and city line - who would offer strong support if needed.

But it wasn't always so. We have had our share of luck, and we owe a great deal to many different people over the years. We know, too, that our success depended on the success of a district-wide effort to create a whole network of

alternative schools. We are, in fact, just one of nearly 30 "options" that are available to families in District #4, aside from the regular neighborhood-zoned elementary schools.

In the fall of 1974, Anthony Alvarado, the new superintendent of District #4, initiated just two such alternatives: our elementary school and a middle school, the East Harlem School for the Performing Arts. Each year thereafter, the district supported the launching of several more alternative schools - generally, at the junior high level. These schools were rarely the result of a central plan from the district office, but rather tended to be the brain children of particular individuals or groups of teachers. They were initiated by the people who planned to teach in them.

It was the District's task to make such dreams come true. The details differed in each case. Most of these schools were designed around curricular themes - science, environmental studies, performing arts, marine biology. But they also reflected a style of pedagogy that suited their founders. They were always small, and, for the most part, staff members volunteered for duty in them. Finally, when the alternative schools outnumbered the "regular," Alvarado announced that henceforth all junior high schools would be schools of "choice." By 1980, all 6-graders in the District chose were they would go for 7th grade. No junior high had a captive population.

On the elementary school level, neighborhood schools remained the norm, though the district handled zoning rather permissively. The only schools of choice on the elementary level are the Central Park East Schools, the East Harlem Block School (founded in the 1960s as a nonpublic, parent-run "free" school,) and a network of bilingual elementary schools.

Today, Central Park East is, in fact, not one school but a network of four schools: Central Park East I, Central Park East II, and River East are elementary schools that feed into Central Park East Secondary School, which enrolls students

from grades 7 through 12 and is affiliated with Theodore Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools.

The Central Park East Schools were founded in 1974, during a time of great educational grief in New York City just before the schools were forced to lay off more than 15 thousand teachers and close elementary school libraries and at a time when the spirit of hope was crushed out of the parent movement and out of the struggles for decentralization, for teacher power, and for structural change. Progressive educators suffered particularly, both because people began to claim that "openness" was "through" (and discredited) and because many of the young teachers and programs that had carried the progressive message were hardest hit by the layoffs.

In the spring of 1974 when Alvarado invited me to build a school in one wing of P.S. 171, it seemed a most unlikely offer. School District #4 served a dismal, bitterly torn, largely Hispanic community. Still, I accepted. Who could refuse such an offer? After struggling for years to make my beliefs "fit" into a system that was organized on quite different principles, after spending considerable energy looking for cracks, operating on the margins, "compromising" at every turn, the prospect that the district bureaucracy would organize itself to support alternative ideas and practices was irresistible. I was being offered a chance to focus not on bureaucratic red tape, but on the intractable issues of education - the ones that really excited me and many of the teachers I knew.

But this was not a time for having large visions, and I didn't want to be disappointed. I met with Alvarado, began to collect some experienced teachers to help launch our effort, and gradually began to believe that he meant what he said. He offered to let us build a school just the way we wanted. The total allocation of funds (per-pupil costs) would have to be comparable to what was spent on any other school, and our teachers would have to meet the usual

requirements of the city, state and union contract. Nor could we be exempt from any city or state regulations. Beyond that, however, the district would support us in doing things our own way.

We began very small and very carefully. First, there was the question of "we." Creating a democratic community was both an operational and an inspirational goal. While we were in part the products of what was called "open" education, our roots went back to early progressive traditions, with their focus on the building of a democratic community, on education for full citizenship and for egalitarian ideals. We looked upon doing, perhaps more than peonage, as our mentor.

Virtually all of us had been educated in part at City College's Workshop Center under Lillian Weber. We came out of a tradition that was increasingly uneasy about the strictly individualistic focus of much of what was being called "open."

We were also unhappy about the focus on skills rather than content in many of the "modern," innovative schools - even those that did not embrace the "back-to-basics" philosophy. Many "open" classrooms had themselves fallen prey to the contemporary mode of breaking everything down into discrete bits and pieces - skills - that children could acquire at their own pace and in their own style. In contrast, we were looking for a way to build a school that could offer youngsters a deep and rich curriculum that would inspire them with the desire to know; that would cause them to fall in love with books and with stories of the past; that would evoke in them a sense of wonder at how much there is to learn. Building such a school required strong and interesting adult models - at home and at school - who could exercise their own curiosity and judgment.

We also saw schools as models of the possibilities of democratic life. Although classroom life could certainly be made more democratic than traditional schools allowed, we

saw it as equally important that the school life of *adults* be made more democratic. It seemed unlikely that we could foster democratic values in our classrooms unless the adults in the school also had significant rights over their work place.

We knew that we were tackling many difficult issues at once. Because of political considerations, planning time was insufficient, but the district tried to make up for this by being extra supportive. Looking back, we were so euphoric that we had the energy of twice our numbers.

We purposely started our school with fewer than 100 students - in kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd grade only. At the superintendent's request, we recruited outside of the usual district channels, in part so that we wouldn't threaten other schools in the district and in part because one of Alvarado's goals was to increase the pupil population of the district and thus guard against school closings.

Families came to us then, as they still do today, for many reasons. Philosophical agreement on pedagogy was probably was the least important. Many families came because they were told by Head Start teachers or principals that their children needed something different, something special. In short, many families came to us because experts claimed that their children would have trouble in traditional schools. Some came because their children were already having trouble in other schools or because older siblings had had trouble in neighborhood schools in the past.

Some families came to us because they had heard us speak and just liked the way we sounded - caring (they told us later), open, friendly, committed. Some came because they had friends who knew us professionally, and some came because they were looking for a different kind of school for philosophical reasons. Yet even among those who chose us because of our presumed beliefs, there was often confusion about what those beliefs were. Some thought, for example, that this would be a parent-run school, and some

thought we didn't believe in any restrictions on children's freedom.

In fact, one of our primary reasons for starting the school - although we didn't often say it - was our personal desire for greater autonomy as teachers. We spoke a lot about democracy, but we were also just plain sick and tired of having to negotiate with others, worry about rules and regulations, and so on. We all came together with our own visions - some collective and some individual - of what teaching could be like if only we had control. Ours was to be a teacher-run school. We believed that parents should have a voice in their children's schooling, and we thought that "choice" itself was a form of power. We also believed that we could be professionally responsive to parents and that, since the school would be open to parents at all times and the staff would be receptive, there would be plenty of opportunity to demonstrate our responsiveness.

Good early childhood education, we believed, required collaboration between the school and the family. This was a matter not only of political principle but also of educational principle, and it motivated us from the start to work hard to build a family-orientated school. We wanted a school in which children could feel safe. Intellectual risk-taking requires safety, and children who are suspicious of a school's agenda cannot work up to their potential. To create a safe school, we needed to have the confidence of parents, and children needed to know that their parents trusted us. It was that simple. Hard to create, perhaps, but essential.

We stumbled a lot in those early years. We fought among ourselves. We discovered that remaining committed to staff decision making was not easy. It was hard, too, to engage in arguments among ourselves without frightening parents and raising doubts about our professionalism. We were often exhausted - sometimes by things that mattered least to us.

By the end of the second year, I had made some crucial decisions regarding the organization and structure of Central Park East. These involved my leaving the classroom to become a somewhat more traditional principal. We have never entirely resolved the tensions over who makes which decisions and how. But the staff continues to play a central role in all decisions, big and small. Nothing is "undiscussible," though we have learned not to discuss everything - at least not all the time. This has actually meant more time for discussing those issues that concern us most: how children learn, how our classes really work, what changes we ought to be making, and on what bases. We have also become better observers of our own practice, as well as more open and aware of alternative practices.

As we have grown in our understanding and impractical skills, we have also reexamined the relationships between school and family. Today, we understand better the many, often trivial ways in which schools undermine family support systems, undercut children's faith in their parents as educators, and erode parents willingness to assume their responsibilities as their children's most important entertainers.

Although we have not changed our beliefs about the value of "naturalistic" and "whole-language" approaches to teaching reading, we have become more supportive of parents whose "home instruction" differs from ours. We give ***less*** advice on such topics as how not to teach arithmetic or how to be a good parent. We listen with a more critical ear to what we say to parents, wondering how we would hear it as parents and how children may interpret it as well.

As we became more secure with ourselves and our program, the district was expanding its network of alternative schools. In the fall of 1974, we were one of two. Within a half-dozen years, there were about 15 "alternative

concept" schools, mostly on the junior high level, were schooling had most blaringly broken down.

The district also dispensed with the assumption that one building equals one school. Instead, every building in the district was soon housing several distinct schools - each with its own leadership, parent body, curricular focus, organization, and philosophy. Most of the new junior highs were located in elementary school buildings. Former junior high buildings were gradually turned to multiple uses, as well. Sometimes three or more schools shared a single building. As a result, the schools were all small, and their staffs and parents were associated with them largely by choice.

By the late Seventies, Central Park East was so inundated with applicants that the district decided to start a small annex at P.S. 109. The district's decision was probably also motivated by the availability of federal funds for the purpose of school integration. While Central Park East has always had a predominantly black (45%) and Hispanic (30%) student population, it is one of the few district schools that has also maintained a steady white population, as large as about 25%. (The population of District #4 is about 60% Hispanic, 35% black, and 5% white.)

In the beginning, this ratio came about largely by chance, but the 25% white population in the school has been maintained by choice. In general, the school has sought to maintain as much heterogeneity as possible, without having too many fixed rules and complex machinery. The school accepts all siblings, as part of its family orientation. After siblings, priority goes to neighborhood families. In other cases, the school tries to be nonselective, taking in most of its population at age 5 strictly on the basis of parental choice, with an eye to maintaining a balanced student body. Well over half of the students have always qualified for free or reduced-price lunches, and some 15 percent to 20 percent

meet the state requirements for receiving special education funds.

In 1980, the annex opened in P.S. 109 and served the same purposes and the same population as Central Park East I. although the new school was a mile and a half southeast of Central Park East I, it began as an "annex," serving two classes of 5- and 6-year olds. Within a few years, it was big enough to be designated a separate school. The parents and staff members selected their own director, Esther Rosenfeld, but they decided to continue to proclaim their connection to Central Park East I by calling their school Central Park East II. And the two schools continued to handle recruitment decisions jointly, to share staff retreats, to plan their budgets jointly, and sometimes to share specialists.

The demand for spaces still far outstripped available seats, and a few years later, the district decided to start a third school. This time the new director, Shelley Price, and her staff decided to call themselves by a new name: River East. They opened in the old Benjamin Franklin High School building beside the East River. The old high school had been closed, largely because of district pressure. It reopened as the Manhattan Center for Math and Science, and it housed, in addition to River East, a small junior high school and a new high school.

Thus by 1984, Central Park East had become three schools, each designed for about 250 students, each with its own individual style and character, yet united in basic ways.

Then, in 1984, at the 10th graduation of our founding, Theodore Sizer congratulated the school for its impressive history and asked, "Why not a Central Park East secondary school? Why not keep the good things going through the 12th grade?" We agreed. Our own study of our 6th grade graduates had persuaded us starting a secondary school was a good idea. Some of our critics had said that a secure and supportive elementary school would not prepare students to cope with the "real world." Our study of our graduates had

proved them wrong. Regardless of race or social class, our graduates had handled the real world well. They had coped. The statistics we compiled amazed even us. Only one of our graduates, who were hardly an academic elite, had left school prior to earning a high school diploma. Furthermore, half of our graduates had gone on to college.

But our graduates had stories to tell. And their stories were not stories about being educated, but about survival. They told us stories that confirmed what Sizer had written about U.S. high schools in *Horace's Compromise*. But the stories our graduates told us were generally far worse than those Sizer chronicled, since he was often describing wealthy or middle-class schools.

We began negotiations with the district and with the city. In the fall of 1985 we opened the doors to Central Park East Secondary School, which serves grades 7 through 12. We are now back where we began, starting something entirely new. However, circumstances are not exactly the same as they were when we began Central Park East I. For one thing, we cannot avoid public exposure even as we muddle through our first years. Then, too, the obstacles that block the path of reforming a high school are harder to budge than those that face elementary schools.

For instance, the idea that an "alternative" high school means a school for "difficult" kids is firmly entrenched in the tradition of New York City high schools, and the anxiety about preparing students for the "real world" is more pressing than in elementary schools. Moreover, the Regents exams, course requirements, college pressures, and the usual panic about dealing with adolescents and their problems combined to make the task even more complex especially in light of New York's recently adopted Regents Action Plan, which runs counter to everything we and the Coalition of Essential Schools believe. With its increased number of required courses and standardized examinations and its greater specificity about course content, the Regents

Action Plan leaves far less room for initiative and innovation at the school level. Another barrier is the dearth of experience with progressive education at the secondary school level. There is little for us to learn from and not much of a network of teachers or teacher education institutions that can provide us with support, ideas, and examples.

But we have a lot going for us, too. We have our three sister elementary schools to lean on and draw support from. We have the Coalition of Essential Schools and a growing national interest in doing something about the appalling quality of many public secondary schools. And, under its current superintendent, Carlos Medina, the district continues to support the idea of alternative "schools of choice" for all children, all parents, and all staff members. We have also been receiving invaluable support from the citywide high school division and the alternative high school superintendent, who oversees a disparate collection of small high schools throughout New York City.

The oddest thing of all is that the incredible experience of District #4 has had so little impact on the rest of New York City. Here and there, another district will experiment with one or another of our innovated practices. But few are willing to break out of the traditional mold. Generally, their alternative programs are mini-schools, with relatively little real power as separate institutions and without their own leadership. Often they are open to only a select few students and thus, are resented by the majority. Sometimes they are only for the "gifted" (often wealthier and whiter) or only for those having trouble with school.

There are many possible explanations for this state of affairs, and we keep hoping that "next year" our ideas will finally catch on. Perhaps the fact that next year keeps moving one year further away suggests that many parents and teachers are satisfied with the status quo at their local elementary schools or that junior high passes so quickly that a stable constituency of parents cannot be built.

But the high schools, which remain the responsibility of the central board in New York City, are clearly in a state of crisis. The drop-out rate is appalling, the fate of many who do not drop out officially is equally devastating, and the decline in college attendance by black and Hispanic students is frightening. Perhaps the time has come for progressive education to tackle the high school again, to demonstrate that giving adolescents, and their teachers greater responsibility for the development of educational models is the key ingredient.

The notion of respect, which lies at the heart of democratic practice, runs counter to almost everything in our current high schools. Today's urban high schools express disrespect for teachers and students in myriad ways in the physical decay of the buildings, in their size, in the anonymity of their students, and in the lack of control over decisions by those who live and work in them.

Although the reasons for the recent national concern over high schools may have little to do with democracy, the current reform mood offers an important opening - if we can resist the desire for a new "one best way." We cannot achieve true reform by feral. Giving wider choices and more power to those who are closest to the classroom are not the kinds of reforms that appeal to busy legislators, politicians, and central board officials. They cannot be mandated, only facilitated. Such reforms require fewer constraints, fewer rules - not more of them. They require watchfulness and continuous documenting and recording, not a whole slew of accountability schemes tied to a mandated list of measurable outcomes.

Do we have the collective will to take such risks? Only if we recognize that the other paths are actually far riskier and have long failed to lead us out of the woods. Like democratic societies, successful schools can't be guaranteed. The merits of letting schools try to be successful are significant. But

allowing them to try requires boldness and patience - not a combination that is politically easy to maintain .

DEBORAH MEIER is the principal and one of the founders of Central Park East School, in East Harlem, New York City.

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"That's exactly right, son. This means you won't have to go back to school in the fall."

REBUILDING: FIRST STEPS

By Theodore R. Sizer
The Coalition of Essential Schools

Repairing the schools is not enough, says Mr. Sizer in agreeing with the Carnegie Report; they must be rebuilt. The Coalition of Essential Schools hopes to show how a "rebuilt" high school can serve students and teachers Better than the conventional schools to which we are accustomed.

Rebuild the schools, the Carnegie Task Force tells us. Repairing them is not enough, because their structure and organization are so fundamentally flawed. The able, committed teachers whom students require will not work long or effectively under the conditions that all to many of today's schools impose.

Many of the commission reports of the early 1980s suggested likewise, but only a handful share the Carnegie Task Force's uncompromising insistence on challenging the assumptions underlying school organizations - and thus schooling itself. More important, virtually no state government initiatives have assumed the necessity for careful "rebuilding."

Most commission efforts have implicitly accepted existing school design and so have merely reinforced it.

Age grading, subject organization, and the common metaphor of "delivery of instructional services" have all been retained. What has been added is more of the same: a longer school year, an extra class period each day, rigorous student testing, and so on. When the reform reports have cited basic structural flaws (e.g., student/teacher ratios in the high schools of more than 150:1 and the student/counselor ratios

twice as high), the costs of changing them have rarely been realistically addressed.

The basic design of high schools and the assumptions that lie behind it are at the heart of the problem, and they are a concern shared by the Carnegie Task force and by the Coalition of Essential Schools. The Coalition is a practical effort at "rebuilding," at making new compromises in the goals and procedures of schooling that will allow for better performance by students and more sensible conditions of work for teachers. The Coalition, organized in 1984, follows the findings of A Study of High Schools, a research project spanning the years 1979 through 1984 that produced three books. Like A Study of High Schools, the Coalition is co-sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and by the National Association of Independent Schools.

The Coalition currently includes 40 schools, ten in a "core" group working intensively, with the project's central staff at Brown University. A growing number of "associate" schools will be forming networks and meeting in regional symposia with only limited contact with Brown. Some members of this group are already working with neighboring universities. Each element of the Coalition, including the Brown staff, funds itself; no money passes among the elements for services rendered, though the fact of their collaboration is helpful in fund raising.

There is no "essential school model." Each school in the Coalition is autonomous and must develop a program and a policy strategy appropriate to its own setting and constituency. What ties the Coalition partners together is a set of ideals, the practical expression of which varies with each community. These ideas reduced to a set of nine generally stated principles surprise few veteran school pupil. although they are in no sense new, taking them seriously is. For example, the practical implications of a serious, thorough intellectual education for all - even youngsters who

appear indifferent or hostile - are substantial. And limiting teaching loads to no more than 80 students per teacher, when combined with a commitment to hold per-pupil expenditures roughly constant, painful decisions.

Although each school works on its own, staff members from the core schools and from Brown University meet regularly, and the principals of the ten core schools form a council that meets twice a year to oversee the program. This council is assisted by an external advisory committee made up of experienced scholars and school administrators. The Brown staff visits the schools regularly, forward studies of key issues that appear to affect all the schools, and organizes workshops and symposia for the entire Coalition.

PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED

The high schools in the Coalition are all well-regarded in their communities. What problems, then, do their leaders seek to solve? The emphases vary from school to school, but there are a number of common concerns. Some teachers believe that too many of their students are too little engaged in their schooling - not learning with the excitement, imagination, or rigor that school staffs believe is possible. Some youngsters - especially those in the academic "middle," the "unspecial" ones - are lost in the busy shuffle of schooling. The compromises that some students and teachers make - the "treaties" by which they agree to get along with little work and low standards - quietly gnaw at faculties, even in good schools. The stultifying conditions of work and the lack of positive incentives for vigorous performance by adolescents and adults alike, which seem to make these treaties inevitable, also disturbed many school-people.

Behind these generalized problems lies the belief that high schools as they are conventionally organized create anonymity and make it very difficult to achieve the kind of one-on-one engagement that good learning and teaching

require. Students differ, and, though this is inconvenient, such differences are an essential part of our humanity and must be addressed. A school that rigidly locks students into separate age groups and makes few distinctions among students within segregated tracts is a school that guarantees mediocrity. Members of the Coalition see no problem as more troubling than that of impersonality, for the chance of provoking excellent work from any youngster without understanding him or her as an individual is remote - a matter of pure chance or the result of home influences.

Most Coalition schools share a painful sense of their overcommitment. To take seriously each individual student and to push or inspire that youngster to use his or her mind well is a tall order, an impossible one with many youngsters in today's fragmented, distraction-filled high schools. Serious intellectual work - and it is *intellectual* work that Coalition schools ultimately value most - demands time and focused attention, conditions that the jangle of seven unconnected periods a day plus the junior prom, driver education, and all the rest often denied.

One can make a strong independent argument for most of the activities found in contemporary schools - from elaborate schedules to special courses; from units on nuclear education, ecology, cosmetology, and Chinese to a cornucopia of special programs; from the vocational to the therapeutic and recreational. However, it is difficult to make a *relative* argument for many of these activities. For example, do we give up the charge to teach mastery of written English in order to accommodate a model United Nations program? Do we give up thoroughly understanding the U.S. Constitution in order to provide quick coverage of the forms of government in the major nations of the world? Do we trade a solid grasp of the single foreign language for brief exposure to two or three? Do we dispense with two seventh periods each week in order to conduct a competitive interscholastic basketball schedule? These are difficult

choices, especially for an institution that has long prided itself on accepting challenges, on taking on any problem that the society assigns it: from training sensitive young voters, to assimilating immigrants, to competing with the Russians, to solving the American disease of racism, to making this nation economically competitive, to helping unwed mothers and fathers cope with the burdens of teenaged parenthood.

Coalition schools believe that the overload of well-intentioned and often noble duties is itself a problem. What is *essential* must be pursued, and general intellectual education is for us the primary essential, the one that best enables all youngsters to observe sensitively, to become informed, to think clearly and with imagination, and to express themselves precisely and persuasively. Such skills are the heart of all good education - whether general, liberal, vocational, civic, or moral. And the focus on them must be primary; all else, whatever its merit, must be secondary.

Saying that the focus of good education must be on essential skills is easy; putting the words into practice is not. The politics of subtraction, the tradeoffs made necessary by true reform, provoke the fiercest form of institutional warfare. Scheduling that slots students and faculty members into one large-group interaction after another must often be redesigned to provide the focus and personalization that good schooling requires. This reassignment of "turf" must be done carefully, but, whatever painful politics it occasions, it cannot be avoided.

If the aphorism, it is *less is more.* If it has a renewed commitment, it is toward *personalization,* paying attention to the character, needs, and potential of each student. If it can reduce its sense of essential to one word, that word is *thoughtfulness* - clear, informed thinking and decent behavior.

CONVICTIONS AND RESTRAINTS

In addition to consensus on the problems to be addesssed, Coalition participants share additional convictions. Unfortunately, they also work under some common constraints. First. we believe that serious efforts to redesign schools must unavoidably involve all aspects of the institutions. Everything important in the school affects everything else. Change the schedule, and the curriculum is affected. Introduce a new mathematics program that stresses inquiry, and teaching styles and teachers' attitudes are affected. Add a new diploma requirement, and either something else is dropped or the entire program is diluted. As Seymour Sarason has wisely argued, schools are synergistic places, and reform efforts that proceed peace meal are doomed to failure. Total school change does not imply radical, headlong speed, but rather attention to every aspect of the school. Indeed, given their commitment to consider total redesign, most Coalition schools are moving forward at a very deliberate pace.

Second, as they engage in the politics of subtraction, Coalition schools must necessarily be clear on their goals, on their view of what is essential. A fruitful place to start this process of clarifying goals is with "exhibitions," that set of exercises by which each student demonstrates his or her mastery of the program. Deciding on the shape and substance of the exhibition forces general issues of priority down to very specific levels. What skills do we wish students to possess, and how can these be displayed? What substantive knowledge must everyone have, and what should be left up to the students to choose? Most important, what is an appropriate ***standard*** of performance for a high school graduate? How can such a standard (for a hierarchy of standards) be presented to all students to catch their interest and to raise their expectations of themselves but not drive them to give up? Shaping the end product, the exhibition, gives clarity to school goals, and setting standards raises fundamental issues about the expectations

that teachers have of students and that students have of themselves.

Third, Coalition members are deeply concerned about the "tone" of their schools. A tone of "unanxious expectation" is desired; the staff must be demanding and supportive. The students have to do the work, with the teachers in the role of explainers, coaches, cajolers, and provokers. This involves changes not only in teaching styles - then so in the curriculum itself - but also in the very attitudes of teachers and students. Students have to know that their teachers care enough about them to demand much of them. They must know that such caring is itself a "subject" of the curriculum, an attitude that permeates the entire community. So described, such a tone sounds obvious and hopelessly romantic, but achieving it within a traditional school bureaucracy is profoundly difficult. It starts with the attitudes of the teachers and administrators toward themselves; it takes time to shape and nurture; it demands great flexibility in the school's regimen. For example, can the normal functioning of a school be abruptly stopped and the attention of all focused on some violent incident, such as the explosion of the space shuttle or a fight in school? Or does the routine schedule mindlessly continue, thus signaling to all the low priority placed on human relations?

Finally, Coalition schools accept their experimental nature. We do not share the assurance of those putative school reformers who merely impose new regulations without a period of honest trial. What we all are undertaking is complicated and must be carried out with an attitude of humility and determination. The restructuring we are engaged in deserves care in its design and must be given time for sensitive experimentation and for the identification of unintended consequences.

The members of the Coalition all share some obvious constraints. There is not much new money available for schools, anywhere, and so the school redesigns have to be

fiscally lean. The existing system is a hierarchical bureaucracy, driven more by tradition then by detailed regulation, but affected by both. Bucking such a hegemony is a rouged task. State and local mandates and union contracts can stifle imaginative reform. Happily, both major teacher unions have so far not only supported Coalition experiments but have forthrightly encouraged them. Some state authorities have been equally encouraging; some have been simply disinterested; a few have been grudgingly tolerant, but hardly encouraging. No state vigorously - that is, with consequential dollars attached - promotes ambitious school redesign activities, a lamentable gap in legislative policy.

Behind this, of course, lie public attitudes. As Diane Ravitch and David Cohen have argued, Americans get the schools they want or deserve. The "shopping mall high school" evolved because we wanted it, and the school that values thorough mastery of the intellectual skills and knowledge essential in a modern society will appear only when we want it to. We in the Coalition believe that Americans today *will* want something better than the generous, yet often mindless, status quo when they have seen some specific examples of what schools might be.

FIRST MODELS

The plans of Coalition schools are evolving in ways that are often similar. Leadership from the principals is crucial; so is the leadership of the teachers - or at least the significant core group of them. Each school is trying to build consensus among staff members, central authorities, governing boards, unions, parents, and students. All are fashioning focused, simplified curricula that are built on a firm foundation of what is deemed "essential." Teaching is often done by teams. Math/science and humanities/social studies/art combinations are common, as is a simply organized daily schedule.

All Coalition schools are trying to "reach" students, to personalize schooling. Some schools are moving toward a staffing pattern in which most adults in the school are at least part-time teachers; administrative and other support functions are being reduced to the barest minimums (one of the tradeoffs of reducing teaching loads).

Coalition schools have been initially designed in one of three ways. Some are *schools within schools.* For example, Radford Gregg, Larry Barnes, and their colleagues at Paschal High School in Fort Worth, Texas, have created an autonomous unit within the school that will ultimately accommodate several hundred students drawn from the entire city. If this experimental unit works well, its influence will spread throughout the school program. Barbara Anderson and Mary Jane McCalmon in Portland, Paul Gounaris and Al Moser in Providence, Judy Codding and Delia Selby in Bronxville, and Sam Billups and Marion Finney in Baltimore have similar plans.

An entirely new school, Central Park East Secondary School (CPESS), has been created in East Harlem by Deborah Meier and her colleagues. It is an extension of Central Park East Elementary School, of which Meier is also director. CPESS is part of superintendent, Carlos Medina's plan for a variety of "magnet" schools within District #4 of the New York City Public Schools. Another entirely new school, this one private, had been planned as an extension of the United Day (elementary) School in Laredo, Texas, but this project has recently been tabled because of financial difficulties in the region.

Finally, Coalition high schools are attempting gradually to change their entire programs by introducing schoolwide plans. One of the earliest and most ambitious of these was Thayer High School in Winchester, New Hampshire, where Dennis Littky and his colleagues have designed a simple but imaginative program appropriate to rural population. Tom Davis, Bill Balch and a host of colleagues at Westbury High

School in Houston, Texas have developed a plan for that large urban secondary school: a 90-student, 3-teacher pilot 9th grade worked through during the 1985-86 academic year; seven similar teams will be launched for all 9th graders during 1986-87, while the pilot program moves to the 10th grade. Clinton Vickers at Adelphi Academy (Brooklyn, New York), Sr. Theresa Foley at St. Xavier's (Coventry, Rhode Island), and Irving Hamer at Park Heights Street Academy (Baltimore, Maryland) and their colleagues have had programs moving in directions congenial to those of the Coalition since the 1970s and early 1980s. The plans in these smaller high schools are being adapted gradually to conform more closely to the principles of Coalition.

For the Future

Taking the principles of the Coalition seriously often has substantial consequences. Some of these principles are especially useful points of entry for all those involved in planning for a member school. Staff members at Brown have taken four of these and, with the help of working parties of teachers from core and associate schools, are preparing studies that will help sharpen the issues and suggest ways to proceed.

Arthur Powell is deeply involved with what he calls "mapping the territory" represented by the idea of student exhibitions for the award of a diploma. This is an old idea. Exhibitions for a staple of American academies in the 18th century, and the notion of progress according to performance has many contemporary advocates. Powell's reconnaissance will identify the most useful of these plans and will clarify the Coalition's particular notion of exhibitions. Holly Houston is working on a definition of the pedagogy of "coaching" that is addressed particularly to Coalition schools; she is also working on a catalog of consequences for overall school practice if coaching is properly stressed and on possible activities to help teachers

develop coaching skills. Grant Wiggins is studying both the curricular directions most likely to enable students "to learn to use their minds well" and the tensions between that aim and the specific curricula that often value mechanical rather than thoughtful mastery.

Finally, Joseph McCarthy, Susan Follett, and I have adapted the detailed operating budget of a representative (non-Coalition) high school into a fictional, but realistic "Alethes High School." From this "real" school budget, we have modeled a variety of possibilities for a "Mythos Essential High School." These possibilities stress a variety of different priorities, but all are constrained by Alethes High School's bottom line. Each of these four studies raises important issues and exposes questions of priority for most Coalition schools.

The Coalition hopes to make a positive difference by showing how a "rebuilt" high school can serve students and teachers better than the doughty conventional model to which we are so accustomed. While the first indications of success are the number of Coalition schools are very promising, the incentives for such ambitious change within the existing system are few, and some people counsel more radical reform strategies that by-pass the existing apparatus of schooling. However, we continue to work within the system.

I personally take courage so to perceive from my two years of work with many school colleagues, veterans of many kinds of school reform, who have found a way to choke back their cynicism and frequent bitterness and try something that they believe will serve young people better. They long for time and freedom to work out their ideas, and they need some reasonable privacy for this working out. They are likely to receive neither. Yet, as the Carnegie Task Force argues, improved schooling can be fashioned only by such people. The obligation they carry is heavy; this may be the last chance for public education as we know it.

COMMON PRINCIPLES OF THE COALITION

Local adaptation of common, general principles is the essence of the Coalition's plan. These nine principles are:

1. An Intellectual Focus

Schools should focus on helping adolescents to learn to use their minds well. Schools should not attempt to be "comprehensive," if such a claim is made at the expense of the schools' central intellectual purpose.

2. Simple goals

Schools' goals should be simple: that each student master a limited number of essential skills and areas of knowledge. While these skills and areas will, to varying degrees, reflect the traditional academic disciplines, the design of programs should be shaped by the intellectual and imaginative powers and competencies that students need, rather than necessarily by "subjects" as conventionally defined. The aphorism "less is more" should dominate; curricular decisions should be guided by the aim of thorough student mastery and achievement rather than by an effort to merely "cover content."

3. Universal goals

The schools' goals should apply to all students, while the means to achieve these goals will vary as those students themselves vary. School practice should be tailor-made to meet the needs of every group or class of adolescents.

4. Personalization

To the maximum extent feasible, teaching and learning should be personalized. Efforts should be directed towards seeing that no teacher has direct responsibility for more than 80 students. To capitalize on this personalization, decisions regarding the details of the course of study, the use of students' and teachers' time, and the choice of teaching

materials and specific pedagogies must be unreservedly placed in the hands of the principal and staff.

5. **Student-as-worker**

The governing practical metaphor of the schools should be student-as-worker, rather than the more familiar metaphor of teacher-as-deliverer-of-instructional-services. Accordingly, a prominent pedagogy will be coaching, to provoke students to learn how to learn and thus to teach themselves.

6. **Student exhibitions**

Students entering secondary school studies are those who can show competence in language and elementary mathematics. Students of traditional high school age, but not yet at appropriate levels of competence to enter secondary school studies, will be provided intensive remedial work to assist them in meeting these standards quickly. The diploma should be awarded upon a successful final demonstration of mastery for graduation "exhibition." This exhibition by the student of his or her grasp of the central skills and knowledge of the program may be jointly administered by the faculty and by higher authorities. As the diploma is awarded when earned, the program proceeds with no strict age grading and with no system of "credits earned" by "time spent" in class. The emphasis is on students' demonstration that they can do important things.

7. **Attitude**

The tone of the schools should explicitly and self-consciously stress values of unanxious expectation ("I won't threaten you, but I expect much of you"), of trust (until abused), and of decency (the values of fairness, generosity, and tolerance). Incentives appropriate to particular students and teachers should be emphasized, and parents should be treated as essential collaborators.

8. Staff

Principals and teachers should perceive themselves as generalists first (teachers and scholars in general education) and specialist second (experts in one particular discipline). Staff members should expect multiple obligations (teacher-counselor-manager) and should show a sense of commitment to the entire school.

9. Budget

Ultimate administrative and budget targets should include, in addition to total loads per teacher of 80 or fewer pupils, substantial time for collective planning by teachers, competitive salaries for staff, and an ultimate per-pupil cost not to exceed by more than ten percent that at traditional schools. To accomplish this, administrative plans may have to show the phased reduction or elimination of some services now provided students in many traditional comprehensive secondary schools.

- TRS -

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***THEODORE SIZER** is the author of **Horace's Compromise** and the founder of the Coalition of Essential Schools.*

Dear Mary,

Enclosed is an article I hope you will publish in ΣΚΟΛΕ. I completed a first draft in January and I did some revising this summer. I think it is about the most central issue in our schools (I wish it were all schools) as well as our country. With the Reagan administration, we have seen our democracy virtually destroyed with the massive covert operations of the "secret government," the CIA, president, and the National Security Council. Only a people unschooled in true democracy would allow over 500 members of this administration to be convicted of their un-democratic deeds. Our challenge is great.

I also suggest you review Bill Moyers' book - *The Secret Government: the Constitution in Crisis* - now available from Seven Locks Press. This is a follow-up to his 1987 1 1/2 hour video production of the same name recently up-dated and shown again on public television.

I trust this finds you well and carrying your wonderful work. Much love to all.

In Peace,
Dave Lehman

"TO LIVE (AND THUS TO LEARN THESE TRUTHS): TEACHING THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION"

By Dave Lehman, January 1988

The bicentennial of the United States Coalition has just passed, and as we enter the gate of this new year, there is no

more crucial charge in the next 200 years to us educators, who are the torchbearers for each new generation, than to see to the full blooming of the democratic potential envisioned by our founding fathers, but yet to be realized. In Mortimer Adler's article in the December 1987 *Phi Delta Kappan* "We Hold These Truths", excerpted from his recent book by the same title - he urges our schools to guarantee that all future students will at least have read and understood the U.S. Constitution as well as the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights (Adler, 271). Although Adler states this is the "least to be expected" and that "much more might be expected," I share the concerns stated by Associate Editor Bruce Smith in his introductory editorial (Smith, 250) when he states his fear that "... we will be satisfied with knowing only the bare facts and strutting the trappings of our knowledge in parlor games, even as we advocate our responsibilities as citizens and let others shape the future of our nation."

It is well past time in our schools simply to expect more "reading" and "understanding" of our democratic processes - hasn't virtually every state in the union had this as a requirement for high school graduation already? No, we must actively and meaningfully engage our students in direct, participatory democracy in their schools. But, before going into the specifics of such a proposal for making our schools and our society as a whole fully democratic, let us at least correct some of the crucial errors still being taught (or by omission, not being taught) about the origins of our Constitution.

Iroquois Indians and "Forgotten" Roots of our Constitution

In September of 1987, being a two-day conference on "The Iroquois Great Law of Peace and the United States Constitution" was held at Cornell University which brought together constitutional scholars, lawyers, and traditional

Iroquois leaders from across the country. [note - the full proceedings of the conference, entitled Indian Roots of American Democracy are available from Cornell University's American Indian Program. Professor Donald Grinde, author of *The Iroquois and the Founding of the American Nation* and a professor at Gettysburg College reported that his research into the origins of our Constitution reveal that the Albany Plan of Union (forerunner to the Constitution) may well have been a copy of the Iroquois Confederacy, and that such concepts as the union of the 13 original states, federalism, "decorum and democratic council" were all borrowed from the Iroquois, but for which they are yet to receive due credit. Grinde also "brought a major new revelation to the Cornell conference, one that for the first time placed the Great Law of Peace (of the Iroquois League of Nations) within the constitutional convention" when he stated: "'One of the framers, John Rutledge, of South Carolina, who was chair of the drafting committee read portions of the Iroquois Law to the other members of the committee'" (Johnson, 5 and 6).

Such revelations at the conference confirmed what had appeared earlier in the Northeast Indian Quarterly, where Bruce Burton had stated:

> "The modern age of democracy had its origin in the vast recesses of this continent, and from here its principles and examples spread throughout the world to other nations. In its very essence it is an 'international' form of government based on the principles of natural equality among the races, the individual's right to property, and the mutual defense of those rights. The 'great experiment' as it has been called, was no 'experiment' at all - but a practicing, working system of pure democracy, stronger and more resilient in pursuit of its interests than any government created from the genius of humans." (Burton, 9)

And in the September 1987 issue of *National Geographic* where the editors had stated:

> "Could it be that the U.S. Constitution owes a debt to the Iroquois? Benjamin Franklin cited their powerful confederacy as an example for a successful union of sovereign states, and contemporary accounts of the American 'noble savage' living in 'natural freedom' inspired European theorists such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau to expound the philosophical principles that helped ignite the Revolution and shape the Constitution." (*Nat'l. Geo.*, 370-371)

Again in the Fall 1987 issue of the *Northeast Indian Quarterly* several articles appeared on the subject and the list of."Selected Readings on Iroquois Contributions to the United States Constitution" was provided including the book - *Forgotten Founders: How the American Indian Helped Shape Democracy* by Bruce Johansen who also participated in the Cornell conference. Upon reading the book, I was more convinced than ever of this glaring error in my own understanding of the roots of our Constitution. Johansen cited literally hundreds of documents in his research including the early writings of Franklin, Jefferson, Hamilton, Paine and others, as well as the Iroquois Great Law of Peace. He referred to such recent American historians as Felix Cohen, who wrote in 1952 - "... in their rush to 'Americanize' the Indian, Euro-Americans had forgotten or chosen to ignore, that they had themselves been influenced by Indian thought and action")Johansen, 13). And to the classic 18th century work of early American historian Cadwallader Colden, the first to write, in English, first-hand accounts of Iroquois society -

> "the present state of the Indian Nations exactly shows the most Ancient and Original Condition of almost every Nation; so, I believe that here we may with more certainty see the original form of all

government, than in the most curious Speculations of the Learned; and that the Patriarchal and other Schemes in Politicks are no better than Hypotheses in Philosophy, and as prejudicial to real Knowledge" (Johansen, 38).

Johansen referred to the original speeches of the Iroquois themselves at various treaty councils, such as that of Canassatego, speaker of the Gray Council of the Iroquois when he addressed the Colonial delegates in 1794, saying:

"Our wise forefathers established union and amity between the Five Nations. This has made us formidable. This has given us great weight and authority with our neighboring Nations. We are a powerful Confederacy and by your observing the same methods our wise forefathers have taken, you will acquire much strength and power; therefore, whatever befalls you, do not fall out with one another" (Johansen, 62-63).

He referred to Benjamin Franklin's close study of the Iroquois and his admiration for their government:

"Indian leaders study oratory, and the best speaker had the most influence, Franklin observed. In words that would be echoed by Jefferson, Franklin used the Indian model as an exemplar of government with a minimum of governments. This sort of democracy was governed not by feat, but by public opinion and consensus-creating custom ..." (Johansen, 87).

And Thomas Jefferson -

"Having admired Franklin so, it was not surprising that where Franklin laid down an intellectual thread, Jefferson often picked it up. Jefferson's writings clearly show that he shared Franklin's respect for Indian thought. Both men represented the Enlightenment frame of mind of which the American Indian seemed a practical example. both knew firsthand the Indian way of life ... it was impossible

that that expe[illegible]nce should not have become woven into the debates and philosophical new things that gave the nation's founding instruments their distinctive character" (Johansen, 101).

Johansen's research led him to the following summary statement

> "The United States was born during an era of Enlightenment that recognized the universality of human kind, a time in which minds and borders were opened to the new wondrous,and the unexpected. It was a time when the creators of a nation fused the traditions of Europe and America, appreciating things that many people are only now rediscovering - the value of imagery and tradition shaped by oral cultures that honed memory and emphasized eloquence, that made practical realities of democratic principles that were still the substance of debate (and, to some, heresy) in Europe. In its zest for discovery, the Enlightenment mind absorbed Indian traditions and myth, and refashioned it, just as Indians adopted the ways of European man. In this sense, we are all heirs to America's rich Indian heritage" (Johansen, 125).

Thus, let us at the outset at least correct this aspect of the history of our U.S. Constitution, a history which Mortimer Adler does not mention, at least in the major excerpt taken from his recent book.

How Should We Teach the Constitution and the Bill of Rights?

I propose that if we are really serious about teaching future generations not only to "understand" the Constitution, Declaration of Independence, and the Bill of Rights, but to put such understanding actively to use as fully participating citizens in a democratic society, then we must go beyond requiring all of our high school students simply to read these documents and pass a test about their main ideas. We must

actively engage our students, school staffs (teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, support personnel, secretarial and custodial staff), and parents in the democratic running of our schools. Students must be immersed in a living democracy in small learning communities (schools). They must be engaged in making real decisions not only about their own individual education based on a variety of real choices, but about the collective life of their school community administrative, judicial, financial, all aspects.

This approach is not necessarily new, but has yet to be fully realized in our educational system as a whole. As John Dewey said in 1915:

> "The conventional type of education which trains children to docility and obedience, to the careful performance of imposed tasks because they are imposed, regardless of where they lead, is suited to an autocratic society. These are the traits needed in a state where there is one head to plan and care for the lives and institutions of the people. But in a democracy they interfere with the successful conduct of society and government ... Responsibility for the conduct of society and government rests on every member of society. Therefore, everyone must receive a training that will enable him to meet this responsibility, giving him just ideas of the condition and needs of the people collectively, and developing those qualities which will ensure his doing a fair share of the work of government.
>
> Children in school must be allowed freedom so that they will know what its use means when they become the controlling body, and they must be allowed to develop active qualities of initiative, independence, and resourcefulness, before the abuses and failures of democracy will disappear" (Dewey, 303-304).

Mortimer Adler's recommendation that "... they (future citizens) will have read the three documents that are our political testament" sounds too much like the more-of-the-same mentality that seems so rampant in most of the current....educational "reform" movement. Edward Deci, professor of psychology at the University of Rochester, recently voiced his concern about this giant step backwards:

> "There is no doubt that our educational system has problems, but many of the proposed solutions are likely to exacerbate them. Initiatives that establish stronger controls in education will result in poorer education ... When teachers are pressured and controlled to provide results, they respond with rigid, controlling behavior. This, in turn, lessens the students' intrinsic motivation and impairs their creative performance ... I think we need to support systems that encourage teachers to be innovative and self-determining and to promote innovation and self-determination in their pupils. By pushing harder with procedures such as standardized curriculums and competency tests, we are likely to end with less excellence. "(Deci, 52-53).

Or, as professor Patricia Cross of Harvard University stated:

> "The school reform movement of the 1980s focuses primarily on mechanical solutions that are imposed from the top and that can be implemented quickly. Tight control and careful specifications may define minimal standards, but they also stifle the spirit of innovation and experimentation that researchers are finding so essential to excellent organizations" (Cross 170);

and to a democratic society!

The reality is that our schools continue to be fundamentally flawed in that they begin with a denial of our most basic democratic freedom, that of the freedom of choice. Thus, the primary living lessons, although not in any

textbooks, of all who experience our education system are from the beginning, in fact, undemocratic. This situation is described by Smith Burke and Barr as follows:

> "For nearly 90 percent of the families in this country, there are no choices in elementary or secondary education. Without choice,without parental consent, children and you (parents) are assigned to specific schools and to specific classes within these schools. The same situation exists for some teachers and administrators who are assigned to specific schools within a district. *This situation is both undemocratic and unAmerican...*" [emphasis mine] (Smith, Burke, and Barr,5).

Thus, we must begin to teach the truths of our Constitution from the very way in which students, parents, teachers, and administrators are initially involved in their schools. As New Orleans teacher/administrator Robert Ferris has put it: "It is a very important democratic right that parents have all kinds of choices and options in which to educate their children" (Ferris, 8). But we must go beyond this simple beginning democratization of our schools less this individualizing and privatizing of educational choice miss the heart of democracy which is the collective dialogue of the community. Again, as Dewey pointed out:

> "I believe that education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform ... that education is a regulation of the process of coming to share in the social consciousness; and that the adjustment of individual activity on the basis of this social consciousness is the only sure method of social reconstruction" (Dworkin, 30).

Schools must therefore be a living democratic experience for our future generations if they are to learn the Constitution. Making such changes as this will not be easy, but fortunately there are working models already available throughout the country. There is the work of the late Larry

Kohlberg and his colleagues at Harvard with their efforts in "moral development" and "Just Community Schools". Secondly, as Thomas Gregory of Indiana University stated recently:

> "Changing high schools will not be easy under the best of circumstances. But, thanks to alternative schools, we already know most of what we need to know to do it, working models of public high schools that have successfully made the transition exist. We call them alternative schools. Because they have been developed for this generation of students, they more naturally fit their needs rather than those of their parents or grandparents. Emulating these existing schools represents the high school's best hope of once again becoming a viable *social institution*" [emphasis mine] (Gregory, 33).

And one of the key features frequently found in such alternative school models is that they are run democratically. As the founder and principal of one such school - the 14-year old Alternative Community School in Ithaca, New York (a public middle school and high school of 215 students) - we have taught democracy directly through the day to day experiences of our staff, students, and parents. We hold weekly "All Schools Town Meetings," planned and run by a student Agenda Committee - one of more than a dozen standing committees dealing with everything from running the lunchroom and budget to a student Review Board (a type of student court) and Curriculum Committee. Our weekly staff meetings are organized and run by a staff Agenda Committee, and our monthly meetings of the Parent Steering Committee as well as the representative, overseeing Advisory Board (made up of students, staff, parents, and representatives from other district schools and community agencies) provides everyone directly affected by any decision in our school with an opportunity to participate in the making and implementing of that decision. This is where

future generations can learn direct, participatory and representative democracy, and acquire the specific skills needed to be a fully functioning citizen in our democratic society. As Tom Gregory said, there is no lack of models of things for educators to try. But, if we are successful, what changes might this bring about in our society?

Toward Fulfilling Our Democratic Promise

Mortimer Adler's article on "We Hold These Truths," closes with a section on "What Remains to be Done?"; suggestions about "... steps that should be taken to improve the Constitution" (Adler, 273-274). I agree with many of these 14 suggestions (actually posed as questions), and it is the eighth that is the heart of what I feel is so crucially needed in our next 200 years of striving to live the Constitution - "... to increase the participatory, as contrasted with the representative, aspect of our democracy" (Adler, 274).

In his excellent book, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*, Rutgers University professor, Benjamin Barber states:

> "It is one of the ironies of the American form of government that no uniform nationwide system of local participation has ever been instituted or even considered. Jefferson outlined a plan for ward government throughout the young nation that might have given it a participatory infrastructure from the onset....But most of the founders concurred with Madison in his distrust of direct participation and hastened to insulate the republics against its tumultuous populists by means of representation." (Barber, 268)

He goes on to make a strong case for finally overcoming the Madisonian mentality and adopting a Jeffersonian approach, offering several suggestions including a "national system of neighborhood assemblies," a "national initiative

and referendum process permitting popular initiatives and referenda on congressional legislation," and "the civic use of telecommunications for debate and discussion of referendum issues," as well as nine other concrete recommendations for revitalizing our democratic citizenship. (Barber, 307)

Benjamin Barber, like Mortimer Adler, points out several things that could be done to correct some of the processes of our democratic system, such as "... removing certain liberal obstacles; representation, the party system, single-member legislative districts, and the separation of powers" (Barber, 308). And here again, the Iroquois can still instruct us as noted in the *National Geographic* article - "Though seemingly eclipsed by history, the confederacy and its form of government continued to function to this day, maintained by fervent Iroquois traditionalists, who adhere to the same Great Law of Peace that sustained their ancestors" (*Nat'l. Geo.* 373). In the words of Lakota (Sioux) Chief Luther Standing Bear, "America can be revived, rejuvenated, by recognizing a Native School of thought" (Johansen, xv).

Finally, Barber clearly states the challenge for democracy in our society in the 21st century in the preface of his book,

> "To restore democracy to America - or to create it where it has never existed is a cosmopolitan project even if it is constrained by American parochialism. When Langston Hughes pleads for liberty in his impassioned poem 'Let America Be America Again,' he pleads on behalf of the human race:
>
> I am the poor white, fooled and pushed apart,
> I am the Negro bearing slavery's scars.
> I am the redman driven from the land.
> I am the immigrant clutching the hope I seek -
> And finding only the same old stupid plan
> Of dog eat dog, of mighty crush the weak
> Oh, let America be America again -
> The land that has never been yet -
> And yet must be - the land where everyone is free.

> The land that's mine - the poor man's, Indian's, Negro's, ME -
>
> There is one road to freedom: it lies through democracy. The last best hope now, as 200 years ago, is that America can be America: *truly self-governing and democratic, thus truly free"* [emphasis mine] (Barber, xvi).

We educators must get about this duel task of (1) correcting our teaching about the origins of our U.S. Constitution, and (2) making our schools genuine democratic institutions in order that today's youth, the very young people who are to become our democratic citizens.

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***DAVE LEHMAN** is the long-time, highly successful principal of the Alternative Community High School in Ithaca, New York, and a frequent and valued contributor to ΣΚΟΛΕ.*

MANDI BUS STATION

She plucks at my sleeve,
Uttering, muttering her story,
Following me behind my right shoulder, out of sight,
The low voice droning on and on insistently.

I shake my head,
Wave my hand in a go-away gesture,
Refuse to look.
The word stream flows unabated;
The demanding presence irks.

I turn, saying "no!" in a loud voice,
Shaking my head vehemently,
Catch a glimpse of my pursuer:
A quick flash of wolf teeth, shadowed behind dark hair;
Sharp, bright eyes; clothed in dusty brown;
Shoulder height - a child.

Again my sleeve is pulled, more insistently still,,
The muttering voice telling its rehearsed drama of suffering,
On and on.
I feel the friction of steel on flint as my heart hardens
And the heat rises to flash point of response.

Then ah! I wheel, shout "No!" - strike out with left palm,
But she is gone, dancing back gracefully,
White teeth gleaming in the dark face
Alight with mirth - she laughs with delight.
She has won!
Either way, I have taken the invitation
To join her world.

We are now one in that world, she and I.
We know each other.

I toss her a quick smile of acknowledgement
As I walk away.

Dear Ms. Leue,

While researching a paper recently, I came across an article which I wrote nearly eight years ago - coincidentally about the same time we founded The Highland School. Although the article was published in "Insights of Members of the John Dewey Society for the Study of Education and Culture" in November of 1981, I would like to share with your readers the ideas about "doing philosophy" with children. I have been both a "home schooler" and a staff member at Highland, and I believe that taking the risk of giving up certainty is a crucial part of democratic education in any setting.

I find that the ambivalence of parents and teachers about exploring the unknown, especially on an equal basis with children, is a continual problem. The difficulty of giving up the security of a finished reality often leads to the problems described by Dan Greenberg in relation to society's reluctance to accept learning as "going on" at Sudbury Valley.

I have enjoyed reading ΣΚΟΛΕ and hope the interactions between those of us choosing new paths can be sustained.

Sincerely,
Candy Landvoigt
Director, The Highland School
Sycamore Springs Farm
Highland, WV 26346

MOM, HOW DO I KNOW I'M AWAKE?

By Charlotte Landvoigt
West Virginia University

In his book *Philosophy and the Young Child,* Gareth Matthews provides many examples of the "philosophizing" of pre-school- and early-elementary-age children. He begins with Tim's questioning how we can be sure everything is not a dream. The puzzlement and wonder about life which underlie philosophy are inherent in his question. My son, too, at about the same age as Tim, asked me, "Mom, how do I know I'm not dreaming? How do I know I'm awake?" At the time I was busy cleaning house and responded, "Just pinch yourself." My son's plaintive comeback was, "But how do I know I'm not just dreaming that I'm pinching myself?" Not pausing in my work, I said, "I'm busy - go find something to do."

A few days later I happened upon the Gareth Matthews' book and realized what I had done. Fortunately, children are not easily discouraged and my son was more than willing to explore with me his questions about dreaming, thinking, and relationships of life on many other occasions. I discovered through this experience that we do not have to "teach" children to philosophize in the sense of providing them with the mechanism to do it. Rather, we can simply provide an environment which permits and encourages them to exercise natural wonder and inquisitiveness.

Educators have failed to provide such an environment in the schools, where, unfortunately, it is easier to focus on the established and the finished. Yet, if we want to do philosophy in schools, we must break away from the "holy assured." As John Dewey stated in *Democracy and Education,* "To say that thinking occurs with reference to situations which are still going on and incomplete is to say that thinking occurs when things are uncertain or doubtful or

problematic." Dewey might have been addressing the Philosophy for Children movement when he stated, "It also follows that all thinking involves a risk. Certainty cannot be guaranteed in advance. The invasion of the unknown is of the nature of an adventure; we cannot be sure in advance."

It requires a commitment to taking chances to do philosophy with children. They are often more ready to take chances and face uncomfortable questions than we adults - for wondering about the nature of life, beauty, knowledge, etc., brings us into contact with our own incompleteness. Our need for security then leads us to deny the search for meanings. Thus, part of the explanation for my answer "Pinch yourself" to my son's metaphysical question involved being busy with other things, but a larger part was my desire to provide a sure, complete, and conclusive answer to a difficult, perplexing, and *risky* question. It wasn't until I was willing to take the risk and share in my son's adventure that we could do philosophy together.

In sum, my experience with children, both as a play therapist and a mother, has led me to the certainty that children "do philosophy" from a very early age. Thinking about aesthetics, ethics, logic, and metaphysics - although not in those terms - is as natural to children as breathing, if we adults encourage rather than squelch the process.

Footnotes

1. Dewey, John. *Democracy and Education,* New York: The Macmillan Co., 1916, p. 148.
2. Ibid., p. 148. 3. Ibid., p. 148.

CHARLOTTE LANDVOIGT is the director of Highland School in Highland, WV.

WE AND THEY
by Rudyard Kipling

Father, Mother, and Me,
Sister and Auntie say
All the people like us are We
And everyone else is They.
And They live over the sea.
While We live over the way,
But - would you believe it? -
They look upon We
As only a sort of They!

We eat pork and beef
With cow-horn-handled knives,
They who gobble Their rice off a leaf
Are horrified out of Their lives,
While They who live up a tree.
And feast on grubs and clay,
(Isn't it scandalous?) look upon We
As simply a disgusting They.

We shoot birds with a gun.
They stick lions with spears.
Their full-dress is un-.
We dress up to Our ears.
They like Their friends for tea.
We like Our friends to stay;
And, after all that, They look upon We
As an utterly ignorant They.

We eat kitcheny food.
We have doors that latch.
They drink milk or blood,
Under an open thatch.

We have Doctors to fee.
They have wizards to pay.
And (impudent heathen!) They look
upon We
As a quite impossible They.

All good people agree,
And all good people say,
All nice people, like Us, are We,
And everyone else is They.
But if you cross over the sea,
Instead of over the way,
You may end by (think of it!)
looking on We
As only a sort of a They!

AN EDUCATION MONEY CAN'T BUY
by Gene Lehman

Money can buy a school system, but it can not buy an education. Traditional education is in a state of continuing crisis because of the increasing amount of time, energy, resources and manipulation needed to maintain school systems.

School administrations tend to blame taxpayers for being too stingy or for not caring about education. They keep looking for government solutions even though the governmental process, much like school systems, is a victim of success. As more and more previously discounted groups become better educated and become a significant political force, the ability of schools and government to arrive at an enforceable consensus breaks down. Schools and government can no longer rule by manipulation and compromise.

We have reached such a state of crisis partly through self-protecting, irresponsible leadership, partly through the public's willingness to act helpless and blindly follow this leadership, and finally through the inexorable law of diminishing tax returns.

Our school systems, really an extension of government, have met the problem of financing expanded operations and rising costs through higher taxes, new taxes, and manipulation of the taxing process. There is a point, not precisely definable but becoming more and more apparent, at which higher taxes bring in less money, simply because productivity becomes over-taxed. It's the old story of killing the goose that lays the golden egg.

Perhaps because our business and political leaders are so much a product of our educational system, government and business operations at the very highest levels are being overruled by the law of diminishing returns. Businesses can generate more income by raising prices, but only up to a

point. They can evade the point of diminishing returns by borrowing, advertising, salesmanship, product manipulation, monopolistic practices and tariff protection, but only up to a point. The longer businesses evade competitive productivity the greater the inevitable crash.

School systems, like so many businesses, have for too long evaded competition and neglected productivity. Even the concepts of productivity, open competition, or educational efficiency seem to be unintelligible to the educators in control of our school systems.

True learning comes about by facing the challenge of reality, by taking personal responsibility and by discovering truth through experience. Most school systems work in just the opposite direction. Truth is determined by some charismatic leader (often far back in a forgotten history) or by some compromising committee. It is passed down through a bureaucratic system. It is standardized, institutionalized, dogmatized, actively enforced and passively accepted.

Those who try to discover the truth about school financing will likely become hopelessly discombobulated, especially if they try to figure out why we have such a system for financing education.

School systems will continue struggling along from levy to levy. There will be cuts in staff, programs and facilities, but always limited by a higher regulatory power systematically applied. The ultimate weapon, school closure, will continue being used mostly as a threat. Parents and public cannot face the prospect of uncontrolled hoards of students suddenly released from school. School systems dare not stay closed long lest the public seriously consider or even temporarily implement alternative programs that could get out of control.

Businesses are finding it profitable to participate much more directly in education, which is the biggest business of all. Even without the stimulation of tax credits or a voucher

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system, entrepreneurs will find the field of education very challenging. Some will contract out special programs to school systems on a guaranteed performance basis. Some will establish open learning centers that put full emphasis on efficient learning. Some will use the latest communication technology to break through all barriers that presently control students and limit access to the best methods, material and instructors.

About 90% of what most schools do can be done more efficiently by computerized technology. As school systems implement technological solutions to problems of learning and behavior, the art of teaching may become more and more irrelevant.

Whether the quality of education will improve or deteriorate will depend largely on the individual response of school systems, parents and students.

New frontiers of learning are open to those who can break free from restrictive institutions and traditions, to those who relish the risks in challenging the future.

Gene Lehman 2/10/86

***Gene Lehman** is the originator, author and distributor of **LUNO**, the Learning Network Unlimited of Oregon, 31960 SE Chin St., Boring, OR 97009. He has a terrific review of ΣΚΟΛΕ in the January 5, 1989, issue of his periodical.*

"WHADDYA MEAN, FREE?"

By Mary Leue

It sometimes helps to try to see our country and its institutions in a historical prospective, if we are to understand trends in any degree of depth. This article attempts to bring that prospective into focus as a backdrop for what we in alternative education are about - which actually translates into "This is what *I* believe," since in our neck of the woods, a thousand alternative educators add up to a thousand different beliefs.

Casting my mind back to the late 1960s and early 70s brings up a great wave of nostalgia and sadness. We were so romantic then, so sure we knew what was wrong and how to make it better! Revolution was in the air: the freedom rides in the South, the civil rights marches and the peace marches, the Black Panthers, the "Chicago Eight," the Cambodia crisis, Kent State, the assassinations of so many of the key figures in the dream both rung our hearts and stirred up our passions for reform.

Such excitement! We knew who are enemies were and we clung fiercely to our friends. So many wrongs which had been allowed to flourish unchecked in our beloved country were finally going to be set right! Injustices for toward the poor in general, blacks in particular, and finally, the plight of the ultimate minority - women and children - were going to be acknowledged and a new system based on justice introduced into the mainstream of American education. "Free the children!" was the cry.

I myself was of an earlier generation, having been born just as the First World War ended, but was experiencing my own youthful freedom for the first time, never having really accepted the version of adult life that had been held out to me during my own young adulthood in the late 30s and early 40s. Having personally gone through the relative

stultification of enforced conformity, sitting for hours at desks screwed down to the floor in rows, I knew at firsthand how big a price in stifled creativity I had paid for doing well within the system. It was easy for me to extrapolate such a fact to the experience of the bodies, minds, and spirits of all tender little children suffering through the daily sterility of somebody else's rules and regulations, while we sang about living in the "land of the free."

"Whaddya mean, free?" was the title we gave to a workshop we put on in 1972 to introduce our brand of education to the public. Another, offered at the university, we entitled "Children of the Broken Dream," meaning the dream of a chicken in every pot, a car in every garage - the dream of universal material prosperity. We wanted to build a new America, nothing less! - and America based on a return to the principles of the founding fathers - on real democracy, individual freedom and justice. We began with the children, since we "knew" that all the troubles started in childhood, and that school was one of the root causes of what was wrong. Little "free schools" sprang up all over the country.

Our "gurus," Jonathan Kozol, John Holt, Paul Goodman, George Dennison, Herb Kohl, et al., gave us all sorts of perspectives on what needed changing, but in the beginning, they (like ourselves) were more focused on what was wrong, on what didn't work - and how much better almost anything else would be - then on what to put in its place. John Holt went in the direction of "unschooling," of "growing without schooling," as the only truly authentic answer to the issue of society versus the individual, of what you might call conformity versus creativity. From this prospective, he became the chief source of inspiration and support to a whole crop of young families who had come to the conclusion that they themselves had more to give their children than the institutions run by the society. Ironically, this home schooling group comes mainly from the social

element which already have within themselves the resources and options to "make it" in American society - like the hippy group which set up communes and rural free schools, which Jonathan Kozol criticized in his fiery diatribe *Free Schools* as being politically obscene in the face of the universal neglect and mass suffering of our unseen ghetto dwellers within the cities.

Being good Americans, we focused our attention on money, or the lack thereof, as the culprit when and if things went badly in our schools. When we gathered at various regional get-togethers to compare notes on how it was going, we spent a lot of attention on the issue of funding - how to get grants, how to raise money, how to attract parents and teachers if you didn't have enough money to put into the enterprise. I think it was easier to try to solve this problem (which most of us couldn't or didn't) than to look more searchingly at issues like *what kind of society are we working to create?* How does what we are doing fit into our ultimate aspirations for our children? Is it OK with us if they choose to become members of the lower class when they grow up? Do we want them to end up like us, in the middle class, with middle-class aspirations? What kinds of things are they going to choose when they arrive at the age of choice? How does the acquisition of basic skills fit into the picture?

What is education, anyway? Does teaching in an "alternative" school actually boil down to indoctrinating children with the "alternative" virtues of vegetarianism, sexual promiscuity, wearing ragged clothes or none at all, playing as opposed to work, "hanging loose and mellow" as opposed to getting frustrated or angry, "doing your own thing" as opposed to learning to take other people into consideration? We were very romantic about the whole thing, it seems, looking back.

But whatever the rights or blind spots of the "movement," somehow the Democratic Convention in

Chicago of 1968 seems to me to have been a kind of watershed of idealism versus reality. Something of hope died watching our young people being clubbed *en masse* by the Chicago police out in the streets while cynical politicians bartered away the spirit of truth and justice inside the hall. Nothing has felt quite the same since then. I'm not saying that's bad - just different. We are perhaps franker, more honest, about addressing primarily our own personal interests than we were before that climatic event. As the romantic, reforming passion more and more came up against the realities of American life, its momentum gradually turned more and more inward, to apply chiefly to people's own families and the families of like-minded people.

Social and Personal Realities

I suppose my quarrel with most educational programs, no matter how "holistic" or humanistic they may be and I include "alternative" education within this category, for the most part - is that they are only as good or as bad, as efficacious or maladaptive as the society in which they are set. We are all products of that society including its schools and colleges, its industrial-consumer economy, and the hideously and artificially hyped-up standard of living which we Americans and those other nations which have adopted our way of greed and waste have chosen to believe it is perfectly moral and workable, even though its ravages lie about us and the tortured faces of its fallout victims, mostly non-white women and little children, appear nightly on our TV screens. We are all subject to the value judgments of this society from within ourselves, when we set out either to teach or to teach teachers. No matter what level we choose to focus on within the educational field, it all comes back in the end to who we, each one of us, is as a person. In this respect, programs techniques - perspectives on teaching and learning can become tools or weapons, defensive or offensive, shields or mirrors. In the end, it boils down to

"thee and me" set in the framework of whatever the institution is which keeps us alive on the earth.

Wilhelm Reich, that amazing, multi-faceted pioneer in somato-psychoanalysis and its relationship to life on earth, understood, as no one else involved with learning and development has seemed to me to understand, the direct relationship between teacher and learner as a function of personal wholeness, of biological wellness, as well as social or perceptual understanding. His concept of developmental self-regulation as a rule of thumb still seems to me a primary criterion of educational success. I *don't* mean by "self-regulation" the travesty of ideological, child-centered permissiveness which passes for true self-regulation. Children are very acute, and pick up whatever hidden messages parents are passing on to them, and often exploit adults - or are themselves exploited - by such unacknowledged attitudinal values. What I mean is allowing children the space to explore what they want for themselves, choosing or refusing to choose, learning by choosing. Call it self-regulation or self-governance. To me it is an essential part of any learning situation. It is all too easy for teaching to become something which fits the comfort and convenience of the teacher, without her/his in the noticing it.

We are, of course, creatures long latency learning period, and it is pretty difficult to sort out the base level biological learning from the acculturated overlay. So, in this sense, I am not advocating a return to a romantic ideology of the "noble savage," or some other Rousseauvian model. But leaving out of account the "wisdom of the body," as Walter Cannon (the great pioneering physiologist of the autonomic nervous system) called it, in favor of more operational, rule-centered considerations in defining educational goals and practices seems to me simply putting new wine into old bottles. And that can apply to any pre-defined educational system, whether Waldorf, Montessori, progressive, parochial - or even alternative! Children of my generation

recognize the iron fist in the velvet glove of Dewey-inspired, "project-centered" progressive programs as easily as they had the old ways of teaching the three Rs when they were carried out by teachers whose personal feelings were not in their work. But the old ways had worked with whole-hearted teachers, too!

What I am saying is that knowing what works in education is really important, but failing to carry out an educational program in a whole-hearted, authentic manner can kill the best of programs.

The question is not always just "What works?" But also "Why does it work?" John Potter, a leader in the small schools network and director of Somerset School in Washington, DC, says that almost anything works well that is not too large. Big institutions dwarf individuals. So I am not claiming educational success for "alternative education" via a universal practice of Reichian principles in these schools. At least, not as such. Simply being small and having to struggle together to survive creates an atmosphere in which children thrive! But when one quotes Reich's saying which appears in virtually every one of his books - "Love, work and knowledge are the well spring of life; they should also govern it." - It is my belief that you go pretty far toward defining a way of being that opens a space for real relationship, out of which learning can grow. And when you take A. S. Neill's self-governance by children, not just for them, as an implementation of Reichian principles, exciting things happen in schools. I wouldn't want to work in a school that didn't understand this as a first principle.

So, in answer to my own initial question, "Whaddya mean, free?" I guess I would answer, being true to yourself,

letting the chips fall where they may, taking your lumps in consequence and learning thereby.

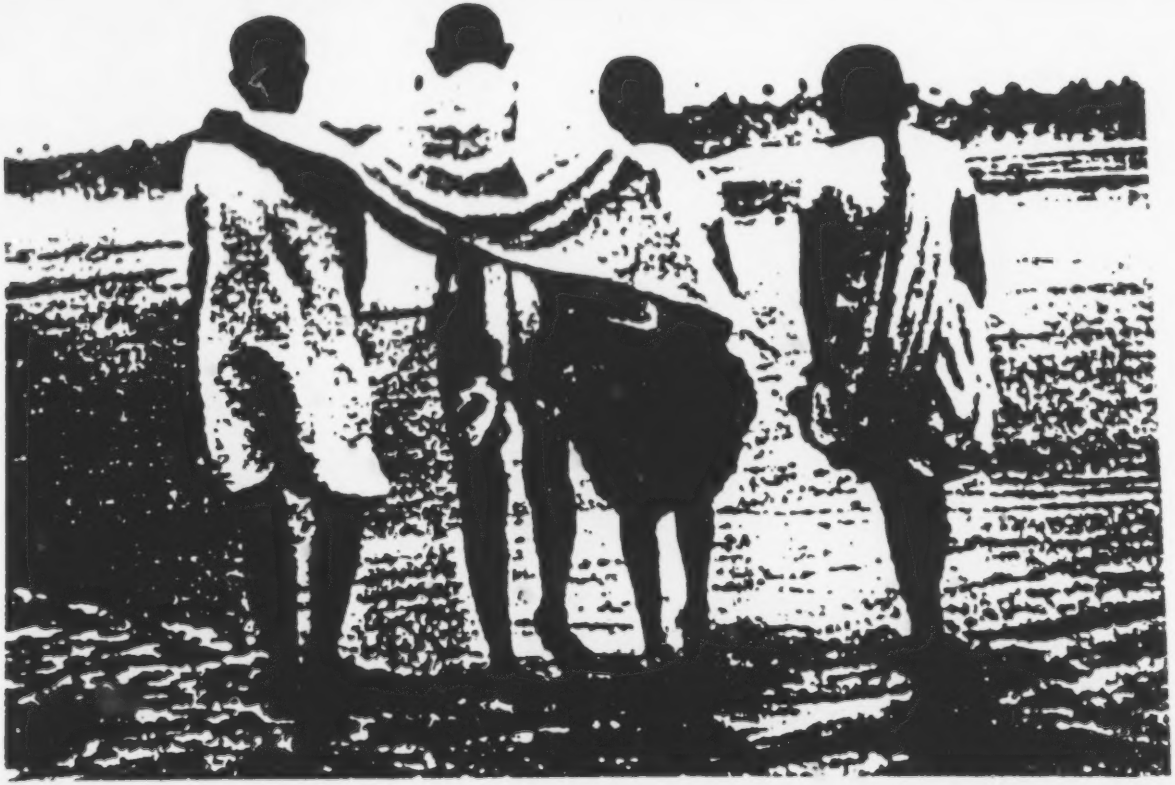
Reprinted with thanks from Holistic Education Review, Summer 1988.

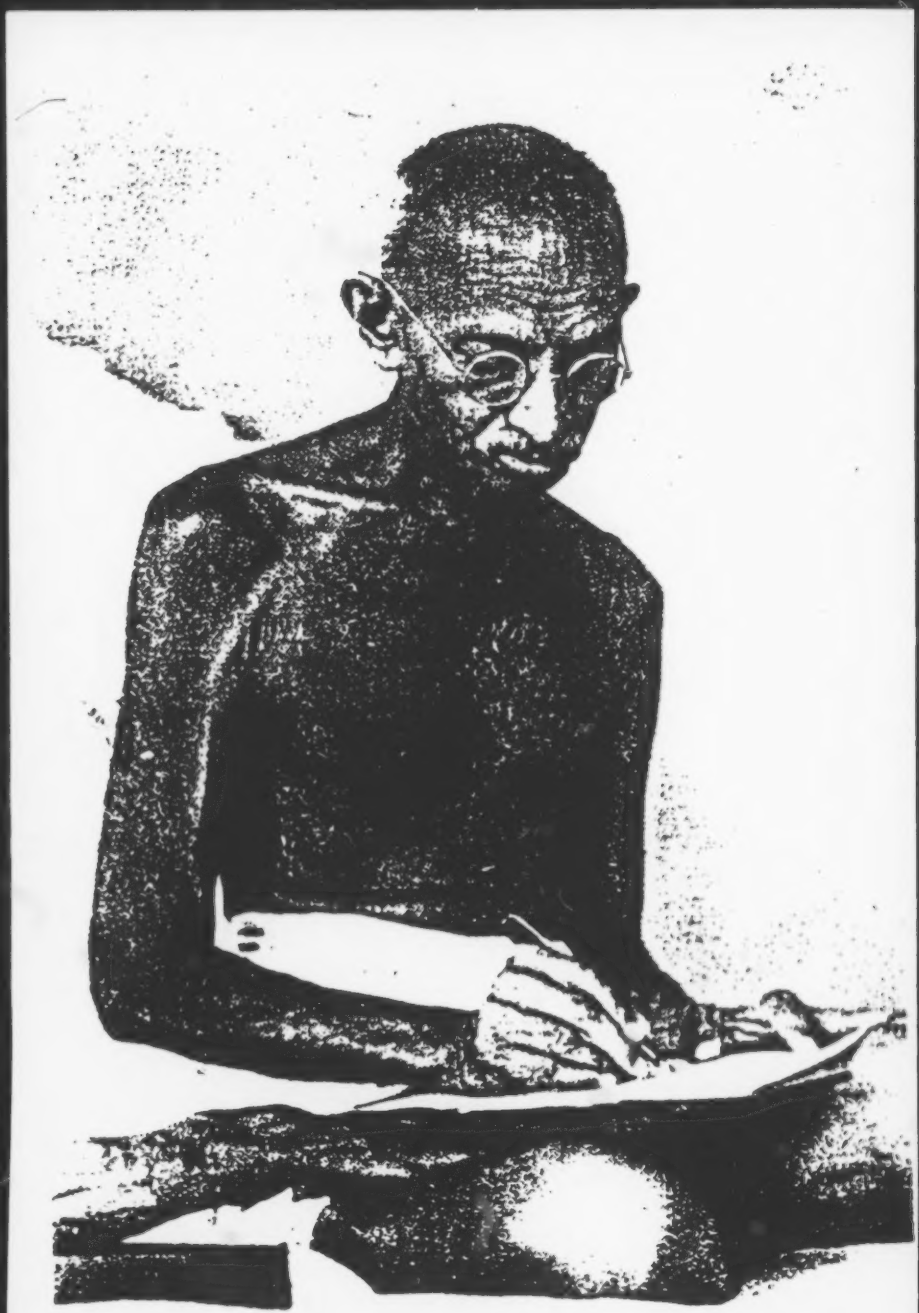
MARY LEUE is the founder of The Free School in Albany, New York, and is an editor of ΣΚΟΛΕ.

"You might call it expanding the school year, but I call it a hostile takeover of summer vacation."

LA Times-Washington Post Servic

Herbert Kohl, founder of the "free school" movement, teaches children in an alternative program in California.





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LETTERS

Dear Mary,

Congratulations! The latest issue is *beautiful.*. Not only is it attractive but it has many articles I found quite useful in my work here. The first and most important one for me, this time, was by Brian Ray. He cites statistics that will come in quite handy during our federal case against the State of Michigan and our circuit court case against the State of Michigan regarding home education. I have duplicated his article and sent it along to our lawyers in hope that they will use all or portions of it, or even contact him to appear as an expert witness.

It was awfully nice reading something by Dan Greenberg that didn't sound as though he were necessarily holding Sudbury Valley School forward as a model of perfection, the heights of which none of the rest of us earthlings could ever hope to achieve.

Keep up the good work. I think it's time for me to renew my subscription. I am no longer a member of NCACS, so I enclose the individual non-member amount of $25.00.

Sincerely yours,
Pat Montgomery

Pat is the director of Clonlara School in Ann Arbor, Michigan, former president of NCACS, and does something very important in the way of networking in the home schooling movement.

[Sorry not to be more knowledgeable about your current home schooling activities, Pat. Thanks for the support for ΣΚΟΛΕ, and for the subscription money - but I hope you come back among us now that the dust has begun to settle! We need you! Ed.]

Dear Mary,

Thank you for another intriguing issue of ΣΚΟΛΕ. I particularly enjoyed Sandy Hurst's article on traveling with students, and found many good ideas in it - even for a well-seasoned traveller such as myself!

I'd especially like to extend a warm thank you to Betsy Mercogliano for the good review of *Home Education Magazine!* It's always interesting to read what others think about one's efforts, and always so wonderful when they're as openly appreciative as Betsy's!

But Peter Haiman's article was the most interesting for me, as it was the same one he sent us several months ago. We printed it as a letter in our July/August issue, and in our Sept./Oct. issue we printed a reply from a reader in Oregon which basically agreed with Peter's point, and gave us some of his own experiences to further illustrate the problem. And in our current (January/February, 1989) issue, the discussion continues letters from the co-coordinator of Clonlara's 1989 conference and a reader who says in part: "I've learned to pick and choose the workshops I attend very carefully. It's only because I've gained a pretty good knowledge of home schooling that I'm able to select workshops that I feel will give me my money's worth." And later in her letter she writes: "These conventions are too often set up to provide little 'captive audiences' for the curriculum suppliers, and are more oriented to keeping *them* coming back than to providing the home schooling parent with what he or she seeks..."

This is a frustrating situation. The home schooling movement is already fraught with charlatans - people who see the astounding success of this alternative as a road to easy gains. There is nothing difficult about home schooling - anyone with the desire to do it already has all he or she needs to succeed. And so we have "instant experts" who claim to have all the answers by virtue of the fact that they, too, are home schooling their children and this claim is difficult to

refute because any normal loving parent is in a sense "home schooling" his or her children all the time.

We don't have any ready answers. The best we can hope for is that people will exercise a healthy skepticism. Learn something about that "expert" whose words of wisdom you admire. Find out where he got his ideas. Look at what he does when he is not busy being an "expert." I'm not sure qualifications count for much - they can be fudged. But when people learn to think for themselves and to trust their own judgments - even when it goes against the so-called "expert advice" - then the instant experts and fast-buck artists will have to go searching for another, more gullible form of prey.

Oh, it's tricky to be your own expert when it's your children's lives you're making decisions about. It takes careful consideration of all the facts, all the approaches, all the possible draw-backs and repercussions. It's like deciding to have your children at home or to start your own business; suddenly *you're* the one in charge, and the success or failure of it all depends upon *your* ability to make the right decisions at the right times. Not that you can't consult the "experts" when you get into a pickle, but who's actually doing this, anyway - you or the experts? In the final analysis, the choices and the challenges are all *yours*.

Uh-oh! I've gone to rambling again. Maybe even preaching a bit (computers make it so easy to get carried away!). I only hope I'm not sounding like one of them there "experts!" Thanks again for an absolutely delightful publication!

Sincerely,
Helen (Hegener)
Editor, Home Education Press
Tonasket, WA

[Thanks, Helen, I hope you will feel free to "ramble" whenever the spirit moves you. Your comments are always pertinent as well as supportive, and we appreciate them a lot. Ed.]

Dear Mary,

I am writing to respond to Sandy's letter concerning Dan Greenberg and his attitude concerning other alternative schools measuring up to the standards he and Sudbury Valley have set for democracy in education. My basic theme is that I agree with Dan and challenge the rest of the alternative schools community to confront this question fully. I would love to hear from other alternative schools which in fact do practice true democracy.

I should say that I have visited Sudbury Valley School (SVS) on two occasions; once in the summer and once for two days when school was in session. I have corresponded with and spoken to many staff, student, and parent members of their community. Though I have read his books, I have neither met nor spoken to Dan himself; he was not around in the summer, and his wife and son had been in a severe car wreck a couple of days before I visited a year ago last October. Perhaps in some ways it's better that I haven't met him. I have been able to get a picture of SVS from the ground up, so to speak. My experience with the school itself is all firsthand. My view of it has not been influenced by Dan any more than it has been by Jon Kozol, Herb Kohl, A. S. Neill, John Holt, Grace Rotzel, or any of the others whose thoughts and writings I admire and whose philosophies and experiences have helped to shape my own.

What I found was a school which was true to its advertising. Democratic principles are firmly and fully held to. Students, staff, and parents share in all aspects of decision-making that pertain to themselves. That is to say, they all share equally (one person - one vote) in policy and budgetary decisions while the students and staff share equally in the day-to-day running of the school. Each individual's power of responsibility over his/her life at the school is protected fully. No one is forced to do anything by any power higher than the School Meeting (consisting of all students and staff), because there is no higher power in the

daily operation of the school! (The adults at SVS do not have the view that the students "help" make the decisions nor do they feel that students should "have input" into them. They do not talk about "students learning to be responsible, and then taking on more responsibility at the school." Rather, they act on their belief that, because both are fully members of the school community, both students and staff are fully responsible and should have equal say in all aspects of decision-making from the first.

That is not to say that they don't see and revel in their students' growth in their ability to carry out their responsibilities, for they surely do! What they don't do is to play god, deciding when each student is "ready" to be responsible, "ready" to have more freedom, "given" to them. Each student is a human being, ergo each is responsible for his/her own life and learning period.

In how many schools is this really true? In how many schools are students fully empowered in all areas? Isn't it all too true that in most alternative schools the adults have set one or more requirements on students? Don't most, if not all, other alternative schools have some kind of class attendance or minimum level of academic work requirement, set by the adults? Don't most, if not all, other alternative schools have some kind of behavior guidelines, perhaps those for "health and safety," which are set by the adults?

I have worked in alternative schools in four states and am familiar with many others. Every other school, save one I will discuss later, imposes some kind of adult-mandated restriction on its students. Now don't get me wrong, I'm not talking about those horrid, traditional "Mrs. Grundy" rules like "No talking."; "Raise your hand to go to the bathroom."; or "Do it because I said so!" No, these are usually well-thought-out, humanistic, "helpful" restrictions. I remember them well: "Everyone must do at least some math, reading, and writing each day. You choose what you do, but you must do some of each every day."; "Everyone must come to

meetings. After all, how will you know or be committed to what goes on if you don't come."; "No hitting. If you hit someone, you must go to the 'time-out' space."; "This year, we are going to study Native Americans. We will make tepees and learn how to make Native American foods and weave our own baskets."; "We are going to all learn how to meditate so we can be more centered and happier."; "This year, we are going to get politically involved in our community. What area will you all like to investigate?"

Again, don't get me wrong. I love math, reading, and writing and help anyone who desires my help in those areas at our school; I come to the meetings at our school and encourage the kids to come, too; I don't like hitting and will step in to stop anyone I see doing so at our school; I am fascinated by other cultures and I see many kids being equally fascinated; believe in the power of meditation and the importance of being centered in one's life and have seen its value in the classroom; I have gotten politically involved in our community and have shared this with my students.

The bottom line, however, is that no matter how well-intentioned I am, no matter how humane or skilled or wise or centered or intelligent or experienced I may be, I simply do not have the right to force or coerce others (even with their best interest at heart) to abandon their own, internally regulated rhythms in order to march to mine. Not only do I not have the right to do so, but it is counter-productive. My students are going to heed their internal selves anyway. If I try to impose my will, they will end up wasting vast amounts of psychic and physical energy dealing with my imposition, even if they end up going along or even agreeing with me.

Now, I am not faulting individual, caring alternative school teachers; this is a systemic problem. Consider the teacher from The Free School, who wrote of his experiences doing drama with his math class. On one level I say, "Good for him!" He recognized the groups apathy and acted on their interests. On another level, I wonder why those kids (who,

according to their teacher, "Weren't the least bit interested in learning arithmetic ...") were all in this math class in the first place. Was it their own choice? Probably not. If not, why not? If it was their choice, then the proper response for the teacher would have been to cancel the class altogether, because the students weren't living up to their end of the bargain. He could then have gone on to lead a read-aloud or dramatic activity if that was what they agreed on.

Instead he said, *'To hell with math!' It was time for me to start doing what I enjoyed doing more than anything else, reading aloud.*" (Emphasis added.) This is benevolent dictatorship; a dictatorship that, I presume, is called for by The Free School's philosophy; a dictatorship that is completely at odds with true democracy in education.

One light note, as well, the Upattinas teacher who indicated that meetings there were mandatory, "Everyone attends the meeting; all previously planned activities are preempted." If this policy was arrived at democratically by the students and staff, then I may disagree with it, but I have no problem with it as an expression of the will of that group of people at that place at that time. If it was imposed as school policy by well-meaning adults, then I have a great deal of trouble with it.

I should emphasize that I am grateful to these colleagues for sharing their experiences and for caring enough to be available to do exciting things with kids. Their sharing is an act of courage and generosity, which few of us are willing to undertake ourselves. Carrying on a dialogue about our experiences as alternative school teachers is the single best way I know of to ensure that our common movement will remain strong and purposeful.

And so, fellow alternative schoolers, examine your commitment to democracy in education; examine how you carry out that commitment. Share with us in the *NCACS Newsletter* and in *ΣΚΟΛΕ* the results of that examination.

Let's not, however, fall into a trap of assuming that, just because we are nice people who do nice things with kids in our schools, we are functioning democratically.

In the spirit of sharing, there is (as I mentioned above) one other school of which I am aware besides SVS that does operate democratically, The Highland School in West Virginia. Before I proceed, let me acknowledge that I am a staff and Board of Directors member at Highland, so perhaps I am not the most unbiased person in this matter, as Dan may not be in the matter of SVS. Therefore, we welcome all NCACS members and others to come visit and see for yourselves or to call or write and start up a dialogue with us.

While we differ from SVS in some operational ways, and while we were founded eight years ago with no knowledge of SVS's existence, we found that we share with them all of our basic philosophical and methodological underpinnings. Other than SVS, I know of no school which operates similarly. I would love to hear about any that do.

I have many friends in various alternative schools around the country, but we always seem to come to that point in our discussions at which they share the latest wonderfully humanistic or progressive activity they "had" their kids doing. I saw many wonderful, humanistic, and progressive things going on at SVS, but they all came from the students and staff acting individually and/or together as full and equal participants in the school community. And that, people, makes all the difference.

Peace,
Alan (Alan A. Klein)
The Highland School
Highland, WV

... and Chris, the teacher at The Free School to whom Alan Klein refers, replies:

Dear Alan,

Having grown up Roman Catholic, topped off with four years of Jesuit high school, I'm not having an easy time responding to your letter. I want to get past my emotional reactions so that I can give serious thought to the important issues that you raise.

Your position feels so orthodox and superior to me. What I received from your letter is that you didn't truly get the beauty and the value of what those kids and I learned together last year while creating that play, and I feel discounted as a result. Further, my fear is that you are issuing a condemnation of our school (The Free School, not Uppatinas) based solely on ideology, without ever having set foot inside our door. That makes me mad!

All right, I think that takes care of my feelings. I needed to say those things so that I would be clear enough to enter into a true dialogue with you. It seems to me that we are looking at a real paradox here - your strict adherence to *DEMOCRACY* has such fundamentalist undertones! I'm not sure it serves children well to approach them with ideological blinders on, though I'm in no position to pass judgment since I have never been to your school and have no way of knowing how it all works itself out in the real day-to-day with the real individual children and adults of The Highland School. One thing I think I've learned here in 16 years of teaching is not to generalize or to relate to children in a theoretical manner, whenever possible. How's that for a paradoxical statement!

Over the years here, I have worked with so many different kinds of kids under such incredibly different circumstances, and my style and my approach have varied greatly, as has the way our school has organized itself. George Dennison expressed so eloquently in *The Lives of Children* the notion that the essence of the teaching/learning experience lies in the relationship between two people. That certainly includes the idea of democracy, though and I think

this is a crucial distinction - in an entirely non-theoretical way.

Teaching is for me extremely personal, and chances according to where I'm at, where the other adults are at, and where the kids are at. There is also the all-important dimension of the state of the group as a whole, living organism. I have come to know that when I am feeling anxious or insecure in school, I tend to behave rigidly and in such a way as to try to control my environment. I like to think of it as "my internal Jesuit taking over." Such attempts usually fail because neither the kids nor the other adults will let me get away with it for long. A majority of the group that I was primarily responsible for last year (I wasn't just their math teacher, though I did serve as the math teacher for the whole school) had very powerful feelings and ways of expressing them, and decided initially that they needed a minimal amount of structure and limit setting from me. Also, looking back, I realized that I felt particularly challenged by this group, and feeling anxious, wanted to be in control. I'm not so sure that was a bad thing because I think it gave us the chance to come together as a group, without the energy just diffusing out into the rest of the school. We are an inner-city school, and it seems to me that it has been necessary for me to do a lot of parenting as part of my being an effective teacher here.

On a practical level, I don't always see setting limits or providing deep emotional support to a child or perhaps to the entire family as essentially democratic, though I'm certainly not ruling out the possibility. That group that I wrote about was an intense bunch of non-theoretical children, mostly boys, that I still believe needed some caring direction from a man in particular. For me to have deferred that role to the entire school community was always an option, though one that perhaps would have prevented that magical experience from ever taking place. There was a point at which I did completely step out of the center, and then the play itself

seemed to become an organic structure (always the ideal, as I see it) within which we all felt safe to challenge ourselves and each other, so that the kind of healing group process that our school places a high value on could proceed of its own momentum. I remained glad that I was not necessarily bound by an institutional adherence to the rule of democracy or any other form, for that mattered.

I am not anti-democratic, either. In this best of all possible worlds, I believe that it's generally the ideal structure for any type of community. I agree with almost everything that you wrote in your letter, which I find to be provocative in a beautiful way, and I mean that sincerely. I do need to say again that I am wary of the danger of operating on the basis that there exists "The Way" to do anything, particularly involving real flesh-and-blood humans. And I'm not at all sure that anything that I'm putting out is "right." I plan to visit Sudbury Valley sometime after the National Conference to experience directly how a school that operates according to strict democratic principles feels on the inside. If I find that it seems to work better for some of the kinds of kids that I have not always felt particularly successful with, then I will have learned something of immense value, and I will make a point of sharing that with you. Echoing your words, this kind of dialogue within or without the alternative school movement is so important now.

Sincerely,
Chris Mercogliano
The Free School
Albany, NY

Dear Alan,

I feel I need to comment also on your letter, in defense of our school (The Free School), partly because your comments about our school made me mad, and partly

because there's another point to be made here, I feel. I guess, since I started the school twenty years ago, I have that right. The fact of the matter is that we do practice democracy in everything we do, in the sense that all decisions regarding the governance of the day-to-day activities and programs of the school can be challenged at any time in a Council Meeting, which can be called at any time by any member of the school including staff, parents and kids. If kids do not exercise their prerogative to change the system, then the system continues to operate from month to month and year to year, and acquires a certain degree of tradition to which new children seem to respond.

However, I am delighted to be able to report the result of some research which I conducted at the school today. What I discovered was that two of our very youngest children, both 6-years old, have, indeed, issued a categorical challenge to the entire Council Meeting system of problem solving which has been our "way" for lo these 20 years! Both these children, on different occasions, made a motion to abolish the Council Meeting system. Unfortunately, from their point of view, neither of their motions passed, and so we still have this system.

The same thing is true of every single one of our classes, programs and other activities including the operation of the school itself! In fact, I myself during the early years of the school, once proposed a teacher strike when the children were being particularly obstreperous, and my motion was delightedly passed almost unanimously! We had no school for an entire week, and most of the parents were very, very angry! I can assure you that we value our democratic ways very highly. If I feel that Chris did not make this point strongly enough in his letter, it may be because I think it is such a matter of course with us that we take it for granted and never raise the issue as a significant one. In fact, I myself had to step back and look at what we do in order to remember that we are, in fact, a democratic school. But I'm

still mad. Why don't you come and check us out personally before you pass half-(fill in the blank) judgments? But don't get too close to me until I cool out, OK? *

Loyally yours,
Mary Leue
Director Emeritus
The Free School

*P.S. I turned sixty-nine last December, but I can still put up my dukes if need be.

Dear Mary,

...I have been concerned with the alternative education movement since I first became aware of it in the 1960's. I was having trouble accepting the public school methods when I read of Summerhill and wrote to Neill for awhile. Then I was involved with the organization of Pat Seery's Grass Roots, but did not have any children of the right ages to attend, so was not very active. Later, I did use the school to provide a means to allow my twin boys to go to college after the ninth grade. Eventually, I became involved with the JEG Colegio Bilingue in Colombia, and, consequently, with exchanging students with the school there.

All the way through my association with free schools I have had a problem with the contradiction between the *alternatives* for *means* and the *alternative ends* that seem to get so mixed up in the efforts.

The whole argument for cultural relativism that Blum has *wrongly* blamed for the lack of education in the US is so badly stated that it has perpetually led to confusion of the issues.

Your article by Leslie Hart is one more *gross example* of how this happens. First of all, he is using *logic* to try to convince us not to use logic in learning and teaching. He is

grossly ignorant of what he is using as material to prove his point. Finally, he is - or seems to be from his examples and claims) unaware of the nature of linguistic development *and* the part that language plays in *HUMAN* learning, since human learning and cultural learning are coincidental with language development. He does not follow his own advice, particularly when it comes to "not so much details as the overall structure,n since the structure is crucial.

Logic consists of a *process* for defining ends based on reality, of weighing alternatives for efficiency (not for the process, but for accomplishing the ends desired) and cost (in effort, not dollars), and choosing the best means to the ends with the least cost. Its most *important function* is just what Hart missed, i.e., to prevent the use of false reasoning and false premises as the justification for one's position. Of course there is a lot of misuse of so-called logic in education, just as there is a lot of misuse of the notions of cultural relativism (which is at the heart of his arguments if you look deep enough), but this misuse will not be corrected if we do away with logic. It will only be possible to correct the problem by using logic, not non-sequiturs, as Hart has done. Baseball, facial recognition, driving and language *do* use logic for learning, particularly for the type of learning that is not instinctual, and humans have very little instinct to go on. We have to learn most of what we know as *meaning*, which is arbitrary and learned, not innate.

Yes, we have a lot of learning in common with other animals who share *part* of our brain structure, but not the part that allows us to learn language, i.e., to have *shared meanings*. Without learning what these shared meanings are, at *whatever* cultural level they might be, no human child can become a part of *whatever* level he might choose to be a part of. Who is Hart to decide what that level is to be in advance? And without the chance to learn them, the choice is not available to the child.

I fully agree with the alternative schoolers that we are using the wrong means, but I am not so sure we are omnipotent about what the ends are, so I believe that all the means should be made available to children in order for them to be competent to choose the ends they want for themselves. ***AND LOGIC IS THE BEST POSSIBLE MEANS FOR SELECTING BETWEEN ALTERNATIVES, BOTH MEANS AND ENDS!***

Sincerely, Mary T. Dailey, PhD.

Dear Mary,

Please publish the following text in your Journal: Let me share my love with you by sending you one of my beautiful New Age poems. You can share your love by sending a goodwill offering to: Emmanuel Petrakis P.O. Box 23104 Athens 11210, Greece. Like you I am an alternative teacher/educator and am in search of a suitable environment to share and teach.

You may publish the two enclosed poems as well as my circular letter/Creative Life Science proposal.

Also please transmit the enclosed "letter to publisher" to a publisher you think may be interested. Thanks.

I can supply you with articles on libertarian education, photos, excellent quotes, poems and more, as our collaboration develops. Let's see a copy of your Journal please. Also let me know about you. I enclose my c.v. By the way, I am single.

LOVE AND PEACE,
Emmanuel Petrakis

Dear Emmanuel,

Wow! Your place or mine? We Americans are such amateurs at love! You will be gentle with me, won't you?

Couldn't we at least shake hands first? Ah, you Greeks! No wonder my cousin Kate lives in your fair city! I'm not sure whether your principal deity is Apollo or Priapus. Or perhaps it's Hermes. In any case, thanks for the poems and the openness. Good luck with the rest.

Blessings, blessings from Above,
Hear the message from the Dove,
Earth was meant Eden to be,
It all starts with you and me.

Crops and fruits the Father gave
Not to see his child a slave
To the chains of greed and lust;
He is loving, yet is just.

Those who do his Laws defile
Sell their souls for what is vile,
They will pay for their excess,
Only Love can cleanse and bless.

Wake up, find out what you are,
Each a God-seed, each a star,
With the Central Son to guide
That we may in Life abide.

All his children, all his heirs,
Spirits bright for whom He cares
Co-creators with a role,
Only Love can make you whole.

Do not stumble, do not stray,
Let His light show you the way
Flesh is mortal, spirit calls,
Life Eternal knows no walls.

Life is joy, a radiant living,
Not a grabbing, but a giving,
Human kindness is the key,
It all starts with you and me.

BE

Where there's pain, you be the balm,
In the tempests be the calm,
In their darkness be a light,
Teach them to forgive, not fight.

In their desert be a pool,
In their chaos, the Golden Rule.
In their hunger feed the soul.
Teach each one to fill his role.

To those astray in every land
Be a brother, a helping hand,
To the despairing give true hope,
In the pit throw them a rope.

To the lonely be a friend,
Love will triumph in the end,
To the oppressed be valiant knight
Stand up for what's true and right.

To the rich be conscience loud,
Be a witness to the crowd,
In the tunnel be a lamp,
A warm shelter to the tramp.

To the needy give some bread,
Raise the living from the dead,
See an orphan? Dry his tears,
God will lead you through the years.

To the convict be a mate,
Tears of love where there's but hate,
To the sick, a healing touch,
Prayer cures mankind so much.

Help the weak and the distressed,
With your presence be they blessed,
To the seeker teach what's true,
Thus will God also bless you.

Dear Mary,

I was pleased to see my article appear in the Summer 1988 issue of but I was surprised to see it published under an incorrect title. The title it appears under is "Teaching Creative Drama in an Alternative School Setting." The correct title should be "The Possibilities For Formal Theatre in an Alternative School Setting."

There is a big difference. Creative drama refers to a type of drama which is improvisational, non-exhibitional, and process-centered. It is done for participant benefit, not for an audience. Theatre is an art form which is *product*–centered. By nature it is exhibitional, rehearsed, and usually follows a script or plan. Without an audience, there is no theatre. What I had hoped to examine in the article were possibilities and appropriateness of theatre with high schoolers. While an article discussing creative drama would be very interesting, the one published concerned theatre.

I would also like to point out that Chris Mercogliano's use of the term "Children's Theatre" is somewhat erroneous. Children's Theatre is a broad term which covers theatre intended for child audiences; what Chris is discussing is not just Theatre *for* Children, but Theatre *by* Children, more commonly coined *recreational drama*. Semantics, no doubt, but important ones. A Children's Theatre company performs *for* children usually with *adult* actors. It is a product-

oriented form of drama and the educational benefits come from watching a play and discussing it. While recreational drama also has a product as a goal, process for the children involved is equally important.

Should all this sound confusing, take heart; it is! Professionals in the field of Child Drama, wishing to standardize terminology so everyone could talk about the same things, met in 1976 to reexamine terminology and establish definitions which better reflected the field (1). Interested persons can find out more about these definitions in an article by Jed Davis and Tom Behm published in *Children's Theatre Review*, XXVII, 1 (1978). 10-11.

Sincerely,
Karen Libman (Stern)

(1) Davis, Jed and Evans, *Mary Jane. Theatre, Children and Youth.* Anchorage Press, New Orleans, 1982, 261-264.

[Thanks Karen, and sorry about the title change. I think I have figured out why that happened. If you remember, your article began with a "prologue" which preceded the actual title. What happened (I remember now) was that the person doing the typing called me up and asked me if it shouldn't have a title, so I, forgetting that it, in fact, did have one, came up with the one you saw unaware, as you see, of the real difference. Send us another article one of these days and we'll get it right this time! Ed.]

FROM FREE FORMING
by Robert E. Skenes

CHAPTER VIII

IT ALL SOUNDS NICE, BUT HOW DO I BEGIN! - A CALL TO ACTION

Introduction

My aim in this chapter is to offer a few simple yet, I believe, effective suggestions for readers whose interests or aesthetic and intuitive gut responses have been piqued by the images and experiences presented thus far. Like Carl Rogers, whose book, *Carl Rogers on Personal Power*, explores from somewhat different angles many of the same themes found in this volume, I believe that one of the chief reasons for sharing through writings is to "intrigue you into opening your mind to new possibilities" (1977, 103). It is my hope that you will find your appetite for tasting these images of fulfillment and openness whetted. And that you will be moved to taste, digest and grow from your own efforts to *experience* and live them.

In offering this chapter, I am torn. For, on the one hand, I believe that it is an overbold and often insulting presumption to suggest what actions (or beliefs) others should take. We must each find our own way, for each of us is the only one who can know and feel what is a fruitful and fulfilling path to take for our selves.

On the other hand, it seems silly that you should have to reinvent all of the wheels which will carry you towards living these ideals in your life's journeyings. Certainly, we can learn from each other as we each individually learn and find our own ways. In *sharing* our ideas and experiences, we can learn from them through reflection and articulation and dialogue. Thus, I have tried to share honestly and fully with you. Of course, you are free to pick and choose and

ignore and reject as you see fit. Such is the spirit in which I offer the material below.

The Information Myth

Much of our present-day mainstream society (including traditional schooling) is built around simplistic yet commonplace beliefs about "information." We are great at studying and researching problems in order to get "enough" information for designing actions. (When these "information-based" actions actually do get "undertaken," they seldom turn out to be solutions.) We have come to rely on persons with special skills to a less extent than we rely on persons with special information or knowledge or expertise--teachers, doctors, lawyers, investment advisors, and many others.

Recently, George Wald, a Nobel Prize winning biological researcher, pointed out that, on such vital issues as the relationship between industrial diseases, pollution and cancer, or between aerosols and the ozone layer,

> We are told that "all of the facts are not yet in"--but all the facts are never in. Each of these situations changes as one studies it. Let us, by all means, have more research, but let us also act, let us do what is needed.
>
> We already know enough to cope with all the major problems that now threaten human life on the Earth. Our crisis is not a crisis of information but a crisis of decision. We live with the myth that, if only our governments had the proper information, it would be used, it would be acted upon (1975, 24).

Experts, researchers, and commission members seldom agree. This is because they do not deal purely with matters of information or fact. When it comes to problems and issues involving *people,* they must be concerned with *values.* It is the values we embrace - by fiat or default or unthinking agreement or consciously and with a will - which

shape the natures and qualities of both our selves and our society.

What I am urging is that readers to whom these images of personal growth and of fulfilling communities of human relation sound good begin to mull over them, to elaborate on them, and to act on them. There has never been any shortage of ideas about what to do or about how to go about something differently. There has been a shortage of persons willing to take the risks and effort involved in actually trying different ways and means. There has been an even bigger shortage of persons willing to give others room for risking and trying new ways. Yet there are more and more such persons emerging - among women, among oppressed minorities, among corporate "dropouts," and persons seeking and creating more humane schooling, health care, and ways of doing business. Remember, as you continue your efforts to realize images of greater being and more fulfilling human community, you are not alone.

First Steps

There are two basic steps which I see as useful in striving to recreate our lives. Although they can be taken separately, they can also be taken together. One is to stop and reflect, to look within, to take stock, to see/feel/think about whence you have come, where you want to go, and how you might start moving. The other step is an outward reflection of this inner process. That is, finding one or more other persons with whom to share and thereby give reality and concreteness to your efforts.

Seeing Your Self

Allen Wheelis speaks to the implications of the information myth when he says, "As truth is lost, intentions become more important" (1959, 111). Thus, we find that some "information" is necessary in order to act. That

necessary "information" is our intentions, our purposes, our desires, our values.

Mary Richards believes:

> Life is an art, for our social practices are embodiments of inner pictures and of inner feeling. Like art, life projects an inner world. What pictures do we have of ourselves? Let us get to know the elements in ourselves which govern our choices. This is a lifetime's artistic labor...The discipline of the artist is to know his materials (1974, 138).

One simple way of taking stock is over the course of a few days to write down and describe some of the areas of your life that you wish were different. These might touch on work, family, school, friends, relatives' relations, or something entirely different.

Then a good way to consider these matters is to draw or paint or crayon or mold them in clay. If, for example, you feel frustrated in your work, find some quiet space and image with your eyes closed or directly on paper or in clay what your frustration looks like, its shape, its color, its texture. This form of expression often goes deeper than mere verbal/intellectual modes and taps into your emotions and more subconscious feelings. However, once you have graphically expressed your images, you may be surprised at what you can discover about yourself by thinking about them or sharing them through a verbal explanation with someone else.

At the same time or after graphically and verbally expressing arenas for transformation, consider how you would like these "things" or relations to be different. What would be ideal?

Then with these two images, you can imagine further and try to graphically work out a third - one that bridges and merges your present situation with your ideal.

This is one means of looking at your self and beginning to form new starting points. Richards describes it

as a process of examining your "values and procedures which tend to have been inherited automatically from the system," and then getting in touch with your own feelings and interests, and developing confidence in your self as source (1974, 139).

In the previous chapter, I have illustrated that, to a great extent, we are our own creations. What we believe consciously or nonconsciously through our cultural habits shapes us. In this context then, we are each faced with the question Richards asks: "When we can do what we want to do, what do we do?" She continues: "This question is a doorway into the unknown, into a new way of working, into self-creation...For we find that we can get in our own way if we are not careful. Our unwillingness to imagine change is a projection of the distance we are keeping from our own inner fears" (1974, 168, 164).

Richards reminds us that the child in each of us is our "growing tip, alive throughout our lifespan." And the adult in us each is

> a friend to wholeness and to differentiation in consciousness and practice. One of the labors of adulthood is to befriend in ourselves those handicapped and underdeveloped parts of our nature which we have set aside. I call this my "philosophy of the dropped stitches." The time comes when they call out to be picked up and included and nourished and woven in as part of our humanity, each with its special contribution to lifevision (1974, 148).

Richards sees "...learning as lifelong - in rhythms of learning, unlearning, relearning." She also sees "all authority in vested institutions" as dimming. "Authority is being transformed, it is being internalized and reborn in the individual conscience of persons. Person as author, as actor, as participant" (1974,159).

Yet it is not always easy to see your self in new ways. Richards offers this example:

I created a stir at the Curriculum Laboratory in London by wanting to discuss administration as an art. One headmaster shouted angrily, "There's nothing creative about administration." I was tenacious in questioning why he refused even to consider himself as an artist. Finally he said, "Because artists are special and I'm not special. There, you've made me say it." Our pictures of ourselves! Once we become aware of bias, we can undertake change. (1974,149).

In other words, when you become conscious and aware of your own values and their implications in your living, you can make a choice whether to maintain them or change.

There is another process that would likely be helpful to many readers in continuing their own transformation and self-renewal. That is the **Intensive Journal** developed by Ira Progoff from his years of collecting more actualizing persons' life-histories and of working with patients in psychotherapy. He describes the Intensive Journal process like this:

The Intensive Joumal is specifically designed to provide an instrument and techniques by which persons can discover within themselves the resources they did not know they possessed...

It systematically evokes and strengthens the inner capacities of persons...It establishes a person's sense of his own being by enriching his inner life with new experiences of a creative and spiritual quality...

When our reliance is upon things or people outside of ourselves, we are not drawing upon the strengths that are inherent within us and, what is more important, we are not developing them further. The progressive strengthening of our inherent capacities gives us a resource that draws upon itself,

and that is, therefore, self-sustaining and self-amplifying...

As we use it to place ourselves, the workshop becomes for us a mid-point in the movement of our lives, a moment in time that is midway between our past and our future. Insofar as the past is over and the future has not yet transpired, this midpoint is an open moment of possibility. Properly used, it becomes like the eye of a hurricane, a quiet place at the center of life, a free, unconditioned moment of opportunity (1975,10, 9,15,14).

Readers who are interested can pursue this independently through Progoff's book - *At a Journal Workshop: The Basic Text and Guide for Using the Intensive Journal* - or by attending one of the **Dialogue House Journal Workshops** given regularly around the country ...

Beginning my own Intensive Journal after separating from my former wife, I made it about halfway through Progoff's book before the demands of this study forced me to shift my energies. I see much strength in the process, however, and plan to return to it soon.

One other guide that you might find useful is a simple and direct book put together by two staff members from the Center for the Studies of the Person, Anthony L. Rose and Andre Auw. They explain the purposes and content of their book:

As authors, our first hope is that *Growing Up Human* will cause you to take a fresh look at your life and to initiate changes for the better. We believe in you. We know that you have the power and the resources to transform yourself and your community. We trust that, if you are tuned in to your basic human nature, that transformation will enrich us all...

> We have intoned ideas, described events, offered suggestions, invented exercises. The rest is up to you. We can do no more than set the stage. It is you who must do the seeking and experience the change (1974, ix, xi).

Finally, here are two books by Laura Huxley which are packed with techniques and exercises for getting in touch with and revitalizing your self: *You Are Not the Target* (1968) and *Recipes for Living and Loving Between Heaven and Earth* (1976).

Sharing the Self You See

The other basic step which I would recommend to readers desirous of recreating some aspects of your selves and your lives is to find one or more other persons with whom to mutually share your inward journeyings. This will reflect your inner processes outward and thereby give them more concreteness and realness. Because your thoughts and feelings and plans are shared, they will take on more reality than if they are simply your own inner imaginings which you lay aside or forget whenever you enter into relations with other persons.

In my own efforts to grow and create different ways for my being, I have found that my commitments to change and transformation are deepened and strengthened when I am able to make a convenant with someone who has similar goals. Through dialogue and mutual feedback we are both enriched. Even with inner fears and feelings which I thought might be "too weird" or might lead to rejection, when I have shared them with someone with whom I share a covenant of growth, I have grown from the process. Personally, I find it difficult to act in isolation and without such a covenant. Even though the person with whom I share commitment to goals of educational transformation has lived twelve hundred miles from me for the past six years, we are able to maintain our

bonds and to draw on their strength when we encounter periods of difficulty and doubt.

Richards speaks to the importance of sharing and making social our commitments when she suggests that "we need to create opportunities for awakening and practicing our initiative and self-trust, becoming comfortable with it and with the initiative of others....Less frequently do we find a place to practice changing direction, to practice in feedback sessions how to learn from experience...(1974, 139, 140).

Two or more people gathered together can create such a place or space for practicing their evolving beliefs. As Pearce remarked, two or three people agreeing on possibilities creates a culture. Such groups are being "cultured" in many realms and locations in American society today. In the sections below for parents, teachers and educational administrators, I suggest some ways of making contact with such groups.

Guides for Parents

If you are planning to become a parent or are considering having another child, I would suggest that you take a look at *Birth Without Violence* by Frederick LeBoyer. (1974). LeBoyer recommends creating a setting for childbirth which eases the transition from womb to world in gentle and welcoming ways. Babies born this way often do not cry. Rather than beginning their post-uterine life with screams and contorted faces, they start out relaxed and most often with smiles. The LeBoyer method is not complicated or difficult. It includes such practices as dimming the harsh lights and loud sounds in the delivery room, letting the child rest on the mother's abdomen for a few moments before severing the umbilical cord, and then placing the child in a body temperature bath. Follow-up studies on children born this way indicate that they are less anxious and fearful and more outgoing and emberant.

If you have infant and preschool-age children, you might find some useful ideas about nurturing the potentials of your children in two excellent books on child development. One is *Child Alive* (1975), a collection of articles edited by Roger Lewin on recent findings about the timing and phases of different abilities in children. The other is *Magical Child: Rediscovering Nature's Plan for Our Children* (1977), by Joseph Chilton Pearce, whose earlier works I used in developing the previous chapter.

If your children are not getting along with each other or with you, there are two simple but effective tactics which can improve your relations. I have found that, when one or both of my children get testy and grumpy, it often helps for them to draw pictures for awhile. It doesn't matter what they draw; it can be anything they want. Yet both my wife and I have often been amazed at how much improved our children's social behavior is after a very short period of such free expression where they are wholly in charge of what and how they express. The effects of this kind of activity often carry well into the next day.

Another tactic which I have found useful was recommended to me by an alternative school director who was especially sensitive to the connections between nutrition and behavior. She had noticed that around eleven each morning, many children started to get the grumps and other kinds of disruptive behavior. From her knowledge of nutrition, she speculated that this might be connected with a drop in their blood sugar and with their bodies being ready for lunch. She found that, by serving orange or apple slices just before eleven, the great majority of behavior problems was eliminated. My wife and I have also used such nutritional "snacks" to help our children maintain more constructive behavior, especially in the hour before dinner.

Parents who want to begin opening your family relations in ways that will help further nurture your children's growth could try starting a family council or

meeting process much like that used at Lewis Wadhams School. In chapter two of his latest book, Rogers describes what happened when one family began using such a process.

> The mother of this family felt like she was having to nag or remind her children to pick up their things too much of the time. She brought this to the family meeting and the children came up with the idea of having a "disappearing box" into which belongings left in the common living space would be put and banished from use for one week. Over the course of the following week, the mother lost all but one pair of her shoes to the box, and discovered "that every problem is largely in the eye of the beholder. Her shoes had not been 'a household mess,' but the children's things obviously were. To learn that she too 'makes a mess' is a painful lesson. But now the power is truly equalized and experienced as such" (Rogers, 1977, 41).

The approach of such a more open and flexible family system is for each member of the family to not only share their points of view and feelings, but also to try to understand and consider those of the other members as well. Rogers explains:

> If this sounds like a completely child-centered family, it is not. The parent has feelings and attitudes too, and tries to communicate these to the child in a way this smaller person can understand...Because they are continually aware of many of their own feelings and those of their parents and because these feelings have been expressed and accepted, the children develop as highly...responsive to other people, open in expressing their feelings, scornful of being talked down to, creative and independent in their activities...

I don't wish to paint too rosy a picture. I have seen some of these parents forget, temporarily, that they have rights, with resultant spoiling of the child. I have seen parents and children revert temporarily to the old ways - the parent commanding, the child resisting. Both parents and children are sometimes exhausted and react badly. There are always frictions and difficulties to be communicated and worked through. But all in all, in these families we fmd parent and child in a continuous process of relating, a developing series of changes whose final outcome is not known but is being shaped by an infinite number of daily choices and actions. The politics of control and obedience, with its pleasing static security, is gone. The politics of a process relationship between unique persons, a very different politics, takes its place (1977, 30, 31).

You may think that your children are too young to begin such a process. However, do not underestimate their abilities. Often we do too much for our children. They learn responsibility by being given it and by making mistakes. Forgetting to feed their pet goldfish or to change its water, they let it die. Sometimes it is harder to hold back and let children learn from such an experience than it is to intercede and save the goldfish!

Another guide which might be useful for readers wanting to improve their relations with their children, their mates, their parents, or other loved ones is Everett Shostrom's *Man the Manipulator: The Inner Journey from Manipulation to Actualization.*. Shostrom describes manipulative and actualizing ways of interaction and how to transform one's behavior towards actualizing through such topics as types of manipulative children, the manipulative parent, methods and a theory of discipline, the actualizing parent, the actualizing parents' bill of rights, teen ways of manipulating parents, parent manipulations of teenagers,

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actualizing parent-adolescent relationships, manipulative vs. actualizing love, and marital fighting.

If you begin to notice your child dying in certain respects becoming less creative and enthusiastic, dreading school, thinking of learning as work - you may want to take more drastic steps. When Mario Fantini noticed such behaviors in his son who was in the third grade, he went to school to try to get his son moved to another class one in which the teacher's teaching style might coincide more with his son's learning style. Fantini was told that this was not possible. He considered moving to another school district, but then he decided to see if other parents might be facing similar problems. So he and his wife held "coffee klatches" with other parents. Out of this they formed a group which could exert pressure and demand that the public schools they supported with their tax dollars make some attempts to provide the kinds of educational choices and options they desired. Fantini has written two books that may be useful for parents wanting to create more educational options for their children. One is *What's Best for the Children? - Resolving the Power Struggle Between Parents and Teachers* (1974). The other is a reader packed with articles about philosophy, politics, experiences, evaluation, financing, and other aspects of alternative schools, including providing alternatives within a single school building. It is entitled: *Alternative Education: A Source Book for Parents, Teachers, Students, and Administrators* (1976).

In addition, there are two national organizations designed to assist parents concerned about their children's school life - the **Institute for Responsive Education** and the **National Committee for Citizens in Education.** Both groups offer personal assistance, as well as publishing newsletters...

Two other books which might be of interest to both parents and teachers are *Half the House* (1974) by Herbert Kohl and *Does Anybody Give a Damn?*: Nat Hentoff on

Education (1977). Kohl shares his own learnings, frustrations and struggles in his efforts to change himself, his way of life and the schools in such a way that we can each learn from his experiences. Hentoff, on the other hand, chronicles the horrors which are far too often the norm in large urban schools. But he also describes some very humane and excitingly successful ways that some people have developed for nurturing their students' growth and learning.

As my studies of the St. Paul Open School and Open Junior High illustrate, parents can successfully unite to demand the kinds of schooling they desire. Although it takes a tremendous amount of energy and effort, it can be done. In the case of the St. Paul Open School, about twenty-five core people built an organization with several thousand members to convince the school board that parents' needs could only be met by creation of an open school.

If you are a parent wanting to begin acting more on these images of personal fulfillment and openness, it is important that you both trust and have faith in your child. Too often, when a child has difficulty with a subject, such as math or reading, many of us assume that the problem lies with the child - she or he is slow, not talented in that area, lazy, or whatever. Yet the source of the problem can often be found in the kind and style of learning setting which the child's teacher creates.

For example, by the second week of the second grade, my son thoroughly detested anything connected with verbal language reading, writing or spelling. He began making comments that he was "dumb." This self-image was not helped any by the fact that his sister, who is only a year older, was already an avid reader. My wife and I considered keeping him out of school one day a week so that we could help him acquire more language skills through some of the organic and fun ways described by Sylvia Ashton-Warner (1972). But after talking with my son's teacher, we

discovered more about the problem. A humorless woman who demanded quiet, order and "eyes front," the teacher had decided that our son was "slow" and put him in the lowest reading group. We discovered, however, that this woman's teaching method was simple and direct - the ditto work sheet. Except for recess, reading groups, and special once-a-week classes like art and music, all of her students spent their time sitting at their desks penciling away on worksheets. My son was not slow in language ability. He was bored! Moreover, he is a mover (the kind of person some people mistakenly call "hyperactive"). He likes to sing and jiggle while he learns. Studies have shown that different people emphasize different senses for their chief learning mode. Movers almost always have to touch, feel, sing and gesture in order to acquire concepts.

Anyway, realizing that our son was in a situation destructive to his growth in self-esteem, much less his language ability, my wife and I searched out a different kind of public school in which we were lucky enough to get him enrolled. We took him to visit the new school for what we thought would be a half-hour taste to see if he would like it. But after meeting his new teachers and casing out the set-up, he didn't want to leave! He discovered that you got to sit and play on the floor, to work at tables, to talk while you worked, to move to different teachers for different subject areas, to have more recesses, to go to and from lunch without marching in lines, and to call the principal by his first name. When we picked him up after that first day at his new school, he had a library book he'd found on race cars. My wife and I were shocked - this choosing his own book was a first. My purpose in this lengthy story is to illustrate that you can do your child a great disservice by not believing in his or her potentials and by allowing teachers or school officials to define the problem as being with your child when it could just as easily be with the learning setting. As a parent, you surely know your child better than most people.

Don't accept limiting definitions of her or him if they contradict your own gut knowledge. If your child begins to have trouble with or at school, go and visit his or her class. Visit other classes and other schools. Use your intuition and reason to feel what might be better. Then go to bat to secure it.

This all points to some other implications of more open and fulfillment nurturing processes for the ways you regard your children and their schooling. One of these concerns grades. If you are trying to encourage your children to find and pursue the things that genuinely interest them - that is, to become more inner valuing and self directing person - you will not pressure them to achieve. They must make "A's" or learn to read at age five or learn algebra in fourth grade because they want to satisfy themselves, not because they want to satisfy you or your wishes for them to "perform" better than your neighbors' children. For if they learn that your affection and valuing of them hinges on their fulfilling your expectations, they are liable to lose touch with their true selves and eventually grow to resent you for teaching them to look outside their selves for reward, approval and happiness.

Finally, parents who decide to take the bold step of holding their child out of school altogether may wish to confer with the **National Association for the Legal Support of Alternative Schools**... In some states, such action does not violate compulsory school attendance laws if you are a certified teacher. One way around such laws is to enroll your child in a "school" which "teaches" through correspondence." NALSAS can put you in touch with such schools. NALSAS also offers assistance to persons trying to establish nonpublic alternative schools and to persons who become subject to harassment from fire and building code inspectors over such technicalities as the height of their ceilings or the size of their bathrooms.

Guide for Teachers

For teachers who desire to move away from roles as information dispensing authority figures and toward being facilitators of learning, there are many resources available. Again, starting with an inner process of getting in touch with where you are and where you would like to be is important. In addition to the case study chapter above, bouncing your beliefs and feelings off some of the excellent books suggested below is one way to continue getting in touch with your present and desired values and purposes.

Freedom to Learn (1969) by Carl Rogers and *Teachers as Learning: Becoming Alive and Free in Teaching* (1972) by Clark Moustakas are both packed with ideas and practical applications for teachers. In *Towards a Technology for Humanizing Education* (1972), David Aspy describes specific values and behavior through which teachers can open up their classrooms to increased personal growth and learning for both themselves and their students. William Glasser, in *Schools without Failure* (1975), illustrates how much "problem" and "low achieving" students can be nurtured through creating participatory and caring learning environments. Finally, nearly all of John Holt's books are crammed with ideas and practical suggestions. I would especially recommend *The Underachieving School* (1972) and *What Do I Do Monday?* (1972).

In a different, but also valuable, vein are personal accounts of transformation. In addition to Kohl's *Half the House* (1974), I would suggest several others. *Homework: Required Reading for Teachers and Parents* (1972) by Gloria Channon tells of Channon's joys and struggles when, after ten years of teaching in traditional ways, she consciously began to drop some of the constraints and restrictions she had been placing on her self and on her students. With humor and compassion, James Herndon describes his classroom efforts in *How to Survive in Your Native Land* (1971). Sylvia Ashton-Warner's personal accounts of her

"organic" teaching style, offered in such books as *Teacher* (1971), *Spearpoint: Teacher in America* (1972), and *Spinster* (1958), a novel, are both a joy and an inspiration to read. As a rich and warm description of how a whole school can be organized and practiced based on notions of freedom and personal growth, George Dennison's *The Lives of Children: The Story of the First Street School* (1969) is a classic.

Finally,two books which are useful guides with exercises and techniques for nurturing your students' growth in the many important and powerful areas beyond our simple rational or cognitive abilities are: *Learning to Be: The Education of Human Potential* (1974) by John Mann and *Transpersonal Education: A Curriculum for Feeling and Being* (1976) edited by Gay Hendricks and James Fadiman.

Of course few, if any, people ever change simply by reading a book. Reading, reflecting, and toying with ideas is only a (not necessarily the) way to begin.

I would encourage teachers interested in trying to change their actions to be consistent with more open and humanistic beliefs to go "shopping." Ask around. Find out which teachers and which schools have a reputation for doing different and exciting things. Ask students at your own and other schools who they think are good teachers and why. Then go and visit people and places. If you have found a colleague to share in your journey of transformation, go on visits together. If time and circumstances allow, go beyond simply "observing" and ask to help, to participate.

Although many people working in alternative schools have somewhat narrow and provincial attitudes about people who are not as "advanced" in philosophy or practice as themselves, those who have taken their values to heart will be more friendly. Of course, everyone gets busy and harried at times. Don't be easily discouraged.

While you are visiting, you will likely find some things that bother, disturb or just plain scare you. The students may seem to be running wild. Noise levels may be at least ten

times greater than you are used to tolerating. Whatever comes up like this, try to talk with someone about it. Be careful not to attack or be overly critical. If something disturbs or puzzles you, inquire about its purpose. Ask how the practice or situation developed. And ask the teachers and/or students how they got used to the practice. Try to learn from others' experiences. If you live in or near a large urban area, there may be a "teacher dropout center" where you can look for people and dialogue.

Approach your departmental chairperson and/or administrator and tell them of your desires to grow and of your need to visit other teachers and other programs. Suggest that teacher aids, student teachers, or substitutes take over your class or classes for a morning or an afternoon every once in a while. If this approach doesn't gain cooperation, you will be forced to make a choice about how firm your commitment to transformation is and about the kinds of risks you are willing to take to pursue your goals. You may have to become more "subversive" and to get "sick" in order to pursue your learning through visits. Or you may have to restrict your travels to early dismissal or inservice days and sneak away. James Herndon recommends holding to your beliefs and, when you can't get standard practices changed, subvert them.

But remember that "all the information" will never be "in." Sooner or later you must begin to act if your new values are to genuinely mean anything to you or others. Certainly, a part of your acting will involve shifting your teaching style from the traditional "information theory" approach whereby students regard you as the authority (and perhaps you regard the state "curriculum specialists" as your authority) who is responsible for telling them what they need to know.

This is sometimes called the "gas pump" approach to education. That is, students come in, get their "tanks" filled and leave. Others have used computer jargon to call it a

"garbage in/garbage out" process in which students come in, take notes, spit them back out on tests and get graded. In most colleges and universities the "gas pump" approach turns into the "grocery cart" method where students push their carts around the university supermarket selecting what they want (or are told they need) from the shelves until they get enough to merit "checking out."

The problem with all these approaches is that the "goods" are prepackaged--in lectures, textbooks or however. Transforming towards more open and growth nurturing values and practices demands that you, the teacher, become something of an "organic gardener" where your students are "seedlings" planted in the humanly rich and resource fertile "ground" of your classroom or school or community.

Richards describes this kind of "organic" learning approach as leading towards personal "wholeness:"

> One part of wholeness is initiative, a trust in oneself as source. In school this is commonly repressed, through working in a onesided way with books, authority figures, and social pressure; or in being too selflessly concerned with serving students. We tend to think that responsibility to others means either deferring to them, or doing everything for them, thinking nothing of ourselves. The roles that are stressed are those of dependency and authority. But how about give and take? How about flexibility of role, autonomy, self-trust, reciprocity? How about doing things not for others but with them? (1974, 137).

Aspy and Rogers have found through research and experience that there are three qualities of teachers which promote personal growth and more involved learning among students. They have also found that teachers can learn to develop and increase these qualities through training and practice. One of these qualities is being a genuine and authentic person. This means sharing your feelings and

thinkings and doubts and joys with your students on a person-toperson basis, rather than within teacher-to-student role limitations. Another quality is the teacher's ability to empathize with the feelings and experiences of his or her students. This indudes trying to understand and put yourself into students' points of view. The third important quality is that of prizing and accepting with "unconditional positive regard" every student as a valuable and worthwhile person. However, this is not to say that you cannot get angry with or dislike certain of their actions. See Aspy (1972,1974) for more details.

Richards describes a summer institute for teachers in which she learned the importance of listening and empathizing and accepting: "At the beginning we were often at odds with one another. We felt we were talking different languages. We resisted each other's meanings. It is often difficult for us, who are teachers accustomed to talking while others listen, to listen to each other without wishing to win points, and to co-operate with each other as co-creators of meaning" (1974, 80). Yet, if you want to create a more democratic open and dialogical setting for your own and your students' growth, genuine listening and co-making of meaning are necessary processes to employ.

At any rate, it is important that you begin trying things in your own teaching. There is no need to wait until you are well versed in ideas. Begin! Explain to your students that you want to "change the rules" so to speak. Give them some ideas of the directions you want to move and begin to dialogue with them as to possible whys and ways. Believe in them and their abilities to explore and to pursue their own learning paths through self-chosen means.

This will not be as easy, for many students will probably not believe in your sincerity. They will test you. They will abuse new freedoms and privileges. They will try to see how far they can push before you will step in and try to control in your old style.

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Hold out; it's worth it! Many of the books which I suggested above offer case examples of what people have done in their own transitioning at both elementary and secondary levels. Rogers and Holt are particularly good in this respect. Glasser offers several chapters on how to begin using meeting and dialogue processes to help your classroom come alive.

Another technique towards holistic and self-directed learning is that of having students create, design and carry through projects - as individuals, in teams, as a class, or as a school.

Once you abandon your ideas that you must prescribe what can and should be learned, you will fmd it easier to tune in to your students' interests and help them be explored and experienced. Becoming less concerned with control, you will be amazed at what happens.

Richards describes what happened when an English school picked the theme of "green" and took a month "to develop it in all different ways and then...end in a festival celebration of exhibits and performances:"

> ...Older boys made a big construction which they painted green and called a monster of jealousy, and they made up a kind of drama of gang rivalry, which they acted and danced for their schoolmates. These were big boys from various difficult backgrounds who had been hard to handle. They were bored in school and angry. Their experience of creating something of their own, a personal political artistic use of physical energy, seemed to lead into more harmony with themselves and their school environment. And the teachers lost their fear of them (1974, 146).

Also, I would urge you not to automatically assume that administrators will be against your efforts. Rogers presents some notes from a language arts teacher who decided to redirect her classes in more person-centered

ways. After imagining her students gossiping something like "Mrs. Carr is going to let us do anything we want, and what's more we get to grade ourselves," she went to the department head and principal and explained to them what she was trying. "Their cooperative and interested responses convinced me that we teachers often use the 'administration won't let us' excuse for our own supposed lack of freedom" (in Rogers, 1977, 77).

For administrators who are skeptical and dubious, there is a wealth of philosophical and anecdotal material available (just a fraction of which was listed above) which with "soften them up." If they want more "hard" or quantitative research evidence, refer them to Aspy (1974,1972) or read Aspy yourself and make a presentation at the next faculty meeting. You might be interested to find which other teachers are willing to join your efforts and which are at least sympathetic.

Should you form a strong group for transformation that includes administrators and parents and students, you may wish to look into **Individually Guided Education** (IGE). IGE is a process for opening and humanizing a school. It starts with workshops and experiences for taking stock of values and goals and then continues by helping you reorganize to better achieve them. Other than that spent on planning booklets and filmstrips, IGE costs no more money than your current programs. IGE is not something you buy. It is a process in which you engage and do yourself. For more information about this process in which more than twelve hundred schools ar engaged, write to **the Institute for the Development of Educational Activities** (IDEA) ...

Guides for Educational Administrators

Many of the ways of changing student/teacher relations which I mentioned in the previous section apply also to administrators' relations with both staff and students. (By

"administrators" in this section I refer chiefly to school building administrators; however, upper echelon administrators should be able to extrapolate implications for their ways of working and relating from these guides as well.)

One of the first outward steps administrators can take is to let your feelings and inner urgings for change be known. Share with your staff, students and parents yow openness to their trying different goals and different practices. You can set the tone for dialogue and transformation of not only your self, but for those around you. As Laura Huxley points out, "when we change, others change too and circumstances change in a manner that is almost miraculous" (1968, 8).

I would suggest that you, also, visit other schools and other programs. If your budget allows, you might consider turning this process around and inviting people from other schools to come and offer seminars and planning assistance with your school participants. Let them know that parents and students are welcome on their team.

Begin processes of dialogue at all levels - involving everyone in your school in the defining and redefining of what learning and schooling should be. You yourself need not have all the details thought or worked out before "presenting" them. (If you do, it's a surefire way for them to fail.) You will be surprised at the good ideas and strengths which will emerge when staff and students and parents shed their roles and begin working together on common problems and common goals. Remember to talk less and listen more.

Do not worry about losing authority and respect. For as happens when teachers put more power and trust in the hands of students, you will gain more respect and need less authority when you involve more persons in making and carrying out decisions for themselves.

One good topic around which to focus the beginnings of such a process is the goals and purposes of your school.

Meetings involving large groups can be broken into small groups of parents, students, teachers and administrators to discuss and work on problems. Then each small group can report out its ideas agreements and disagreements to the body as a whole. Through such dialogical processes, the clients and participants in a school can become involved in its evaluation and transformation in ways far more significant than mere statistics or test scores.

Your first reaction to the idea of sharing decision-making and power may be to think that it would never work, that strong and centralized leadership is necessary in order to run an organization as large and complex as most schools are these days. However, Rogers states that "it has been substantiated that leaders who trust organization members, who share and diffuse power, and who maintain open personal communication have better morale, have more productive organizations, and facilitate the development of new leaders" (1977, 289). This is soundly supported by many of the reading sources which I suggest below.

Rogers states that "it has been discovered that the most powerful stance one can take in any relationship is, paradoxically, to leave responsible power in the hands of each person or each group." And "where power is unequal, or where one is perceived as more powerful the teacher or administrator are examples - the first steps must be taken by the perceived leader, the perceived power" (1977,139).

Now all this may sound as if your job as an administrator and as a professional will be made obsolete through these processes. This is not so. However, your role will shift. Just as the role of the professional teacher shifts from instiller of facts to gatherer of resources, creator of potential learning situations, and guide, counselor and friend of learners (including other teachers), so does the role of the administrator shift from that of dictator of policy and shaper or order to advocate and facilitator of the desires of all of the school clientele and workers.

This does not necessarily mean that everyone's desires can be satisfied through the programs and persons in your particular school. However, it does mean that your goals and programs will become more flexible. There is no inherent necessity for uniform programs within a school. To permit the majority to dictate the shape of the whole school is not democracy. It is a dictatorship which results in the tyranny and oppression of minority groups and their goals. Why can't one teacher, or six, or whatever number who desire, be given the tolerance and respect to try another way? Why can't several groups within a school organize around different assumptions, different goals, and different practices? Preservation of diversity and individual uniqueness is what characterizes a democracy. To some extent, such diversity already exists in the different teaching styles employed behind the doors of each classroom. Why not legitimize such differences, bring them out in the open, and begin sharing and learning from each other? There is nothing to lose except fear and paranoia. People in schools need not compete with each other if they recognize that every person has valuable strengths as well as human weaknesses. Above all, remember that your institution is designed to serve people. Persons' unique and individual needs should take precedence over set procedures and standard practices and expectations of behavior.

All these things sound simple. They are not. They are difficult and they involve taking risks. Yet the rewards are greater than the risks. Once you begin to do any of these things, they start getting easier. As you involve others in the process of dialogue and transformation, more ideas and actions will be generated.

Finally here are a few books which you may find helpful.

Two excellent ones to start with are *Synergic Power: Beyond Domination and Permissiveness* (1974) by James H. and Marge Craig and *Synergetics: An Adventure in*

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Human Development (1976) by Norman Coulter, Jr. The Craigs explore themes similar to those I have developed here, but with the emphasis on the needs and ways for developing cooperative rather than competitive organizations. Coulter describes a series of processes for developing what he calls the "synergic mode" of functioning whereby people can draw upon increased powers of cooperation and creativity both personally and in groups and discussions.

Three books which discuss the needs for and processes of educational change are *The Dynamics of Educational Change*:

Towards Responsive Schools (1975) by Joyn I. Goodlad, *Schools in Transition: The Practitioner as Change Agent* (1975) by Kenneth A. Tye and Jerrold M. Novotney, and *The Power to Change: Issues for the Innovative Educator* (1973) edited by Carmen M. Culver and Gary J. Hoban. A central idea in these volumes is that district administrators, school board members and persons from schools and their communities need to engage in "continuous and serious dialogue about the purposes of schooling" and how these purposes relate to what they are doing (Tye and Novotney, 1975,148).

There are also a number of helpful works on ways to humanize organizations and their management. One classic among them is Abraham Maslow's *Eupsychian Management: A Journal* (1965). The Journal is a record of Maslow's ideas, suggestions and speculations formulated while he spent a summer as "a sort of Visiting Fellow at the **Non-Linear Systems,** Inc. plant" at the invitation of the company president. Another classic is *The Human Side of Enterprise* by Douglas McGregor (1960). McGregor's book was one of the "textbooks" that formed the charter of Non-Linear Systems. Lastly, the work of Chris Argyris has also been pioneering in the realm. *Personality and Organization: The Conflict Between System and the Individual* (1957),

Integrating the Individual and the Organization (1966), and *Organization and Innovation* (1965) are all packed with pertinent analysis and case materials which you might find useful. One of Argyris' more recent books, authored with Donald A. Schon, should be of special interest to educational administrators. Titled *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness* (1976), it describes how we operate on "theories of action," how to diagnose our "theories-in-use," how to transition toward and learn behavior appropriate for more open organizations (which they call "Model II"), and the implications for professional education of these ideas and experiences.

A Few More Rousers

Here are three highly provocative books which strike to the heart of the issues involved in taking charge of the quality of your experiences and of your life: *Tools for Conviviality* (1973) by Ivan Illich, *Reclaiming the American Dream* (1965) by Richard C. Cornuelle, and *Instead of Education: Ways to Help people Do Things Better* (1976) by John Holt.

Illich traces the takeover of more and more of our lives by modern institutions of medicine, education, industry, government and law. He then describes how recovery of our lives can be accomplished.

Cornuelle uses basic American values of independent work and action to look at the "failure of the independent sector" and the concomitant growth of large-scale corporations and government into monopolistic and inefficient institutions. Then he suggests guidelines for strengthening the independent sector and thereby increasing the realization of a free and democratic society.

In what some people might consider his most radical book to date, Holt begins by stating: "This is a book in favor of doing - selfdirected, purposeful, meaningful life and work - and against "education" - learning cut off from active life

and done under pressure of bribe or threat, greed and fear" (1976, 3).

Several other books are sure to spark your imagination, arouse your anger, or win your admiration of their authors. Here are two books about people who have taken the risk and made the leap from unsatisfying work towards creating new patterns of work and life which they find more fulfilling. If you are on the brink, they may help you feel less alone and give you some ideas in which directions you might jump: *New Work/New Life: Help Yourself to Tomorrow: A Report from People Already There* by Laile E. Bartlett (1976) and *Breaking Out...of a Job You Don't Like...*and *The Regimented Life* by Don Biggs (1973).

Another book which should help you feel less alone in your personal strivings towards transformation is *The Everyman Project: Resources for Humane Future* (1977) by Robert Jungk. Jungk, a German author, demonstrates that trends toward more open and humane ways of organizing our selves and our purposes are visible among people all over the world. He enumerates these trends in all aspects of society and speculates as to their implications for our futures.

In *Dear America,* Karl Hess (1975), a former Goldwater speechwriter turned pacifo-anarchist, offers a libertarian critique of American society and shares ways to create participatory democracy and decentralize industry and technology, as well as government, so that people can become the authors of their own experience.

And finally, in a fictional scenario of a possible present called *Ecotopia: The Notebooks and Reports of William Weston* (1975), Ernest Callenbach describes some ways that a humane and ecologically conscious society might look.

Many valuable resources for exploring and practicing your transformation can be found through the **Association for Humanistic Psychology**... Besides its annual

meeting, AHP often has regional meetings which pull together the talents of many persons who are on the cutting edge of humanistic thought and action. Most sessions at these meetings go beyond lectures to involve the participants in discussion and practice of new ways of being.

Continuing Your Beginnings

Richards points out that "it is not the structure of an institution that makes the differences, nor curriculum nor grades nor degree nor intellect nor arts nor sciences, but the values and behavior or persons" (1974, 156). Acting on different values, we can transform our selves and our relationships. But it is not easy.

> "You need new arts of initiative and of judgment and of making agreements. It cannot be done any longer by fiat, or by an appeal to protocol or procedures...The danger in letting things go their own way is that they follow the inertia of old habits" (Richards, 1974,167).

Like learning to play the piano or to type, we must consciously practice until new patterns are formed and integrated so that we act from them with less effort. No amount of reading or thinking by itself can transform our ways of being, just as reading about playing the piano is no substitute for the experience of playing.

Such new patterns and habits for acting are at a different level than our old ones. Rogers reminds us that they form a "process base for wise action...not a static authority base." The process is one of continually "testing hypotheses in thought and action, discarding some, but following others." We come to recognize that there is no such thing as static truth or objective scientific "knowledge" (Rogers, 1977, 250). Rather, we come to trust in a changing series of approximations and practices which work, in any given context, toward our ideals.

Becoming people who passionately live our inner values, we can begin to "ride our lives like natural beasts, like tempests, like the bounce of a ball or the slightest ambiguous hovering of ash, the drift of scent: let us stick to those currents that carry us, remembering them with our souls" (Richards, 1975, 7).

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ΣΧΟΛΕ

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ALBANY, NEW YORK

EDITORIAL COMMENT:

There is a time in the life of an organization which represents a fork in the road, as it were, of its development. Decisions, choices, made at such a juncture determine once and for all in the life of that organization what its subsequent life will be - and sometimes, represent its incipient decline.

In those terms, this issue of ΣΚΟΛΕ is at one and the same time the on-going journal of the life and concerns of the NCACS, but also, at least by intention, a vehicle for looking at organizational options. Thus, the **Profile** article by Emanuel Pariser gives us a first-hand account of the life of the Community School in Camden, Maine. We feature the first parts of two educational studies, one of Piaget, Skinner and Dewey by Rosalie Bianchi, the other of the elements of fear and force in education by Charles Wieder.

The chief "food for thought" article by Chris Mercogliano on the subject of the life of organization as community - and in particular, our own organization, the NCACS - is supplemented by a number of reprints - one by your editor written at a time when an earlier alternative schools organization faced a similar split in the road - and did not survive the split - as well as articles outlining some of the serious problems we face, both as educators and as human beings, in a seriously troubled time.

We also feature an introspective article by Charlene Liberata which I hope you will find as rewardingly insightful as I did, plus poems by her and by our old friend and contributor Gene Lehman.

Last but not least are three letters, one from Dave Lehman, another valued contributor and long-time principal of the Alternative Community School in Ithaca, New York, a remarkably moving and thoughtful one by Josh Amundson on the subject raised in the last issue of democracy in education as applied to his beloved Farm School - a courageous and caring letter from a young man of remarkable integrity - and a third from Valerie Dinkeloo, a contributor new to us, as, clearly, we are to her, who strikes us as sharing very deeply both our concerns and also our purpose in struggling to continue to publish ΣΚΟΛΕ against all sorts of odds, most of them originating from with the Coalition itself! Thanks, Valerie!

PROFILE:

The Community School
P.O. Box 555 • Camden. Maine
04843 • 236-3000

***The Community School** was founded in 1973 by Dora Lievow and Emanuel Pariser. Over 200 students have been through the program and 70% have received their high school diplomas. Licensed by the Maine Department of Education and Cultural Services as a private alternative school, the program only accepts students who have left school and/or are in the process of dropping out. As well as being the oldest alternative high school in Maine, it is the only one of its kind in the State, possibly in the nation. In an effort to "get the word out" on our experience and to encourage others to use what we have learned in whatever way may be beneficial, the School has assembled a National Advisory Board and give Emanuel a working sabbatical to write and raise funds for the program.*

A Day In The Life: The Community School
by Emanuel Pariser

The Community School sits at the top of Washington Street in Camden, Maine. Its conventional white clapboard three story architecture belies the intense non-traditional education which takes place within. A small sign in need of repainting hanging on the front porch is the only obvious indication that the building houses anything different than the similarly built homes which abut it. The 1985 Dodge Van adorned with the School's whimsical CS logo, and the comfortable porch furniture - a gold three-cushioned couch and a molded plastic chair which looks like a refugee from a

major airport - do little to distinguish the School from its surroundings.

Our visit to the School will take place on one day late in the fall of 1989. The day begins in darkness because the sun has not yet made its ascent over Camden's sheltered harbor, and the sky has not yet had a chance to turn the azure blue it wants to when the winds blow from the northwest. It's 6:15; an alarm clock rattles somewhere on the third floor

pprenticeship,paid work+learning through the internship program.

and Steve rises out of bed and stands up quietly, avoiding the half-eaten dish of ice cream which is occupying the space next to his sneakers. He moves quietly and quickly, throwing on his working clothes, checking his wallet for lunch money, and combing his hair rapidly.

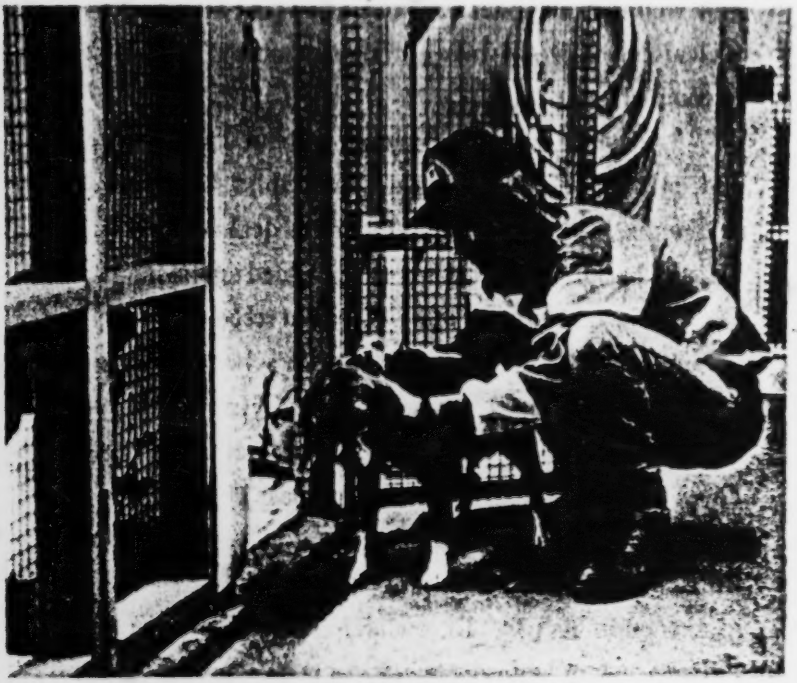
Steve's first really conscious decision of the day is whether or not to wake up John. John sleeps in the same room and depends heavily on other people to get him up in the morning. He often greets anyone who does attempt to arouse him with a series of brief negative utterances. John may well lose his job if he is late again, but Steve has made it clear that he won't wake him up any more if John is going to complain.

Steve slips out of the room without disturbing John, and, picking his way down the steep third floor stairway, thinks that it's really the staff's job to deal with John, not his, and besides, he doesn't need the added aggravation.

The questions of motivation and responsibility raised here must be addressed by the entire school community. Who is responsible for getting John up? How can we teach him to get up to an alarm clock? Is he demonstrating that he doesn't want to be at the School, or doesn't he know how to get up on a consistent basis? What is going on in his current life at school that he wishes to sleep through? How was he awakened in his past? Do we let him lose his job and learn through "natural consequences", or do we "carry" him until he is able to actualize the necessary behavior? Who are "we" in this case?

It is indicative of the School's emphasis on preparation for "real life", that this issue will get as much attention and thought as a question about John's hatred for science.

But for Steve, now navigating through the music room, which has collected dishes, glasses, cups, and over-filled ashtrays as though it were some magical magnet attracting only used kitchenware, these issues are not immediately relevant. He enjoys his work painting and scraping down at the wharf. He likes the idea of working



Student helps out at the Animal Shelter for his social service.

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and finishing school at the same time. Perhaps for the first time in his life, he has waked up looking forward to a day not filled with failure.

Steve fixes himself some coffee and toast for breakfast, gives up on a half-hearted attempt to corral some food for lunch, and takes out some frozen hamburger for the supper he will cook this evening. Cindy, the staff member who is on today, walks through the kitchen with toothbrush, towel, and shampoo in hand. Kelly, a fellow student, is rumbling through the refrigerator looking for food she ordered for her lunch that seems to have disappeared.

After a couple of cordial words with Kelly on the pros and cons of hiding your food in unmarked sandwich bags, Steve bangs out the front door at 7:45. He walks down the Washington Street hill feeling the first mildly warm rays of the sun whose attempts to raise the temperature from the early morning's chilly teens are unimpressive.

Back on the third floor, John continues his slumbers unperturbed by the honk from his boss's pickup truck or the angry rattling of the tools in the truck's bed as the vehicle accelerates away. An hour later John is downstairs having gotten a wake-up knock from Cindy and is trying to cadge a ride to his work site. John explains that it's too far to walk to, impossible to hitch there, and really it's all Steve's fault because he promised to re-set the alarm when he got up in the first place.

On the basis of previous discussions with John about getting up and getting to work, Cindy declines to intercede in

the fate which has befallen him on this crisp autumn day. She suggests that he get hold of the boss, explain the situation and figure out a way to get to work if he is still needed.

John has not yet made up his mind whether or not the School will be a place to find success, or simply a new place to fail. There is certainly nothing about the program which guarantees success, in fact at times like this, John feels that the whole experience is positively confusing. He wonders: why are they not helping? Isn't that what the staff are paid to do? Why didn't Steve wake him up? Is it worth it? He decides to take a walk and see how things look when he gets back.

Despite Cindy's concern over John's fate at the School (she is his "one-to-one," a special advocate for him in the school community), she gives him the space to make his decisions. In any case she does not have the time to track him down right now because two new students are waiting for jobs class to begin and she is the teacher.

Work forms fully one third of the School's core curriculum. Students cannot possibly hope to realize their goal of independence when they leave if they cannot find and hold a job. For experiential learners, a job which involves training and pay is an ideal educational experience. For students who have never had the sense that they could support themselves, work is the primary avenue through which society will grant them a measure of autonomy. For students whose economic situations are such that earning

income takes precedence over day school, daytime work and night school allow the program to harmonize these discordant pressures. The School also offers apprentice and internship programs to students who lack the skills or self confidence to hold an entry level job.

Cindy is helping Sally and Kris, two new arrivals, to define what their job interests are. Sally claims to have superior secretarial skills and be an adept computer operator, but she has never held a job for more than two months because of family issues. Kris, on the other hand, only knows what she doesn't like for work, has never held a job, and is not sure what might interest her. Hoping that a real-life search might stimulate effort and interest, Cindy opens up the latest edition of the local newspaper and the trio scours the help wanted ads.

As Sally and Kris take turns calling possible job sites, and impossible ones (Sally has noticed that a book publishing company needs a managing editor), Cindy gets up to answer the tentative knocking on the front door.

An interviewee has arrived earlier than expected. Two men step in, the taller asking if this is the Community School. They couldn't find it by the directions they were given and have been driving around town for the past 20 minutes.

As Cindy ushers the two into the living room, John returns from his walk around the block. He notices the unfamiliar maroon pickup truck parked in front of the School and wonders who's visiting. John has decided not to call his

boss today because he would just get the guy mad; and if he was really that mad, John could always find another job.

The fact that John owes $200 in room and board expenses - students who owe more than $250 without special cause are asked to leave the program - and can't afford at this point to lose his job and look for another, is a thought which, if allowed at all to enter his consciousness, is quickly dismissed as irrelevant to the day's activities.

Discovering that Cindy is in the living room with an interviewee, he reflects for a moment on his initial impressions of the School. When he first visited with his parents it didn't seem like a "school" at all. There were papers all over the front counter and a hurriedly written sign in magic marker saying "Please Clean Your Dirty Dishes - Chore Evaders BEWARE!!" taped at one edge of the counter top.

John's interview seemed very long and involved. Buck, a staff member, kept wanting to know about his family, what he wanted to do in life and asked him to say something good about himself. That seemed pretty weird to John. Then he had to call back to say he was interested and they wouldn't let his mom call for him.

The acceptance process at the School is long and involved. It is most important that students see this as their own choice, and that they are clear as to what they hope to get out of coming. Students who succeed come from a wide variety of situations for a relatively small number of reasons. They want to finish high school, to attain a credential which

has in the past seemed totally out of reach. They want to do more with their lives than hang out and survive. They want to individuate from their families. They want to learn practical responsibility so that they can function more successfully on their own.

John wonders how he got accepted. Only one out of eight applicants gets in, someone had emphasized - probably to make him feel better. All he had to do was write a letter back describing something good about himself, read "Fourth of July", a pretty cool book about Vietnam, and write a short report on how he felt about it. That was easy. Next thing he knew he was driving up with all his bags for the first day of the trial period.

By the time John has finished reminiscing about his own interview, a man comes out of the living room and sits down at the dining room table. John nods hello, and walks off to make himself some coffee. Time has opened up for him since he isn't at work today. He is filled with conflicting feelings - on the one hand enjoying his "freedom," on the other hand, apprehensive that someone will start ragging on him about work. As he sits on the porch puffing on a cigarette, the interviewees leave and John mumbles his goodbye to them.

At 3:30 Steve knocks off from work. He has told his boss that he needs to cook tonight and leave early to prepare an "approved meal". Having worked with C. School kids before, the employer knows that cooking is a diploma

requirement and carries a degree of seriousness that few home economics courses hold for 17 year old males.

Steve enjoys cooking. As the eldest of five children, he learned a lot from his mom and has a particular predilection for cooking sweet pastries. He already has two "approved" meals and tonight could be his third. He is cooking lasagna - one with and one without meat.

Cooking here is a little more complicated than at home because of the staff. They have strange eating habits. Many of them are vegetarians and those that aren't still seem to attach too much importance to vegetables. Steve sets about preparing his meal in a competent and orderly fashion.

He does not get distracted when John cranks up AC/DC on the stereo at four o'clock, or when Joslyn and Kelly sit down at the counter and make suggestions about how they would cook his meal and how much they loved the way their mothers cooked lasagna.

Dinner time is a litmus test for the nature of the day at the School. The sun has gone down and won't come up for more than 12 hours. Ice crystals begin to form on the storm windows as the temperature drops and water vapor from cooking, showers, and coffee-making leaks out the interior windows.

Many students have never before sat down at an evening meal together. For others dinnertime has been pre-empted by T.V., booze, and parents on the second shift at work. On a good day students and staff all participate in the meal and stragglers hang around the dinner table for good

talks and jokes. On a bad day people reject the meal, tension between people is palpable, dinner can be served and returned to the kitchen in under 15 minutes.

Ten minutes after he has finished washing the meal's dishes, John is in the living room talking with Cindy in a one to one meeting. He relaxes into the soft couch and waits for her to begin asking him questions about the day. Cindy looks at him directly and tells him that she is worried that he is going to get kicked out for going over the room and board limit, especially when he is not following up with his boss. She is quiet.

John feels both messages: that he is in danger of crossing one of the limits at the School, and that Cindy continues to care about him and his fate. Sometimes he gets the feeling that she wants him to graduate more than he does. But not today. John senses his own responsibility in this situation and realizes that he does not want to lose his relationship with Cindy. Not fully meaning it, he suggests that he will call the boss tonight. Their one to one ends fifteen minutes later after they have developed a proposal for Thursday's group rap to replace Kelly's food which he ate last week and to cook her breakfast on Saturday morning, taken a look at what John's options outside the C.School are, and compared their favorite Vietnam movies now in video.

At 7:30 classes begin. Tonight John has energy for class work. He is studying the war in Vietnam, which is his social studies class, and has had a chance to read parts of a

few books, watch a video, read some poetry by soldiers, and struggle with some difficult pieces written by people who were in favor or against the war.

John's dad had seen active duty in Vietnam but never said much about it. It felt like a secret heavy weight which hung over the family. These classes were nothing like the ones at his old school. They were interesting and people were encouraging. There were no grades, just tests at the end of each course.

Although many activities at the Community School are counted as classes, for the five and one-half months a student is in residence, evening classes are the core of the formal academic curriculum. Each class begins with a group activity designed to interest, relax and concentrate students' and tutors' minds.

In conjunction with the School's teaching staff, from two to five volunteer tutors help facilitate classes every night of the week except for the Thursday group meeting. Tutors are generally local community members who enjoy working voluntarily with adolescents and have a particular interest in one academic field.

Classes are completely individualized and self-paced, and are concentrated on "skill building" for some students and on areas of personal interest in as many cases as possible. A series of competency tests measure successful completion of these classes. The intent of academics at the Community School is to revitalize the learning process for students: to help make them less afraid of making mistakes,

to encourage them to take risks in thinking about things, to build their self confidence and trust in others so that they can engage in the genuine dialogue which is at the heart of all learning.

For many students the School is the first time any one has paid attention to how they felt about the material they were being asked to think about. It is the first time that they have been tested for a learning style and been regarded as a serious learner rather than someone with a "disability". It is the first time that people have expressed confidence in their abilities rather than disappointment in their performance.

Without grades, comparative test scores, or any interstudent measuring devices which often create barriers to learning, students more directly experience the intrinsic value of what they are studying.

Steve's math class tonight brings him to the shores of the hated ocean of fractions. He has always disliked math since third grade when he hated his teacher. Steve feels panicky about more failure in this subject. He sees math as one of the big obstacles to his graduation. For this reason he wants to get it over with. He wants to be done before he has started.

And now he is on the beach, staring at these crazy numbers which everyone always compares to pies. His tutor tonight is Dora, who knows that Steve is very uptight about math just as she was many years ago as a student. She assures him that he will get through it and pours a handful of

Cheerios onto the table. They play with the cereal zeroes dividing them up into various groupings and subgroupings.

It's fun. The frothing, swirling, fractional ocean seems to subside a bit. Although he doesn't quite believe that he is really doing fractions, Steve continues because the problems seem clear enough and he can eat them whenever he finds the answer.

For a moment, the Cheerios remind Steve of breakfast and Kelly's comment about missing lunch food. He knows that John took some of her bologna last week and wonders how to get him to stop. If no one else does, Steve decides that he will raise it at group rap on Thursday. He has tried talking directly to John but it doesn't seem to have any effect.

Unlike the other academic classes, group rap, our seminar in self governance and interpersonal relations, is convened only once a week. It is attended by the entire school community. As many as 14 people nudge their way into the small living room to discuss and vote upon the week's community issues.

Discussion items may range from individual rule violations to special requests for privileges, to discussions of the affective side of the Community School process, to processing a conflict between two community members.

Originally we had hoped to have the community be completely self-governing and open to re-definition from day one. Over time it became apparent that we had to adopt some baseline rules and procedures which were not open to

change by votes - the unalterable rules often designated by students as the "intolerable rules". These guidelines form a codified continuity which is useful due to the limited five and one half month stay of each student group.

What history the rules don't embody, the staff and former students carry as the School's "culture". One of the biggest elements missing from the School is the presence of committed older students in residence who can through example create a positive sense of identity with the program and its process. Former students who participate as current tutors, board members, seminar leaders, and helpers provide some of this modeling but probably not as effectively as "seniors" in a larger program might.

Claire, a graduate of eight terms ago, bounces in as classes break up. She has moved to the area from Portland, in part to be near the school, and in part, to be further from home. She is friends with several current students, has a car and apartment, and is currently enrolled in a therapeutic massage school.

Claire knows several of the current students and likes to keep in touch with the staff as she struggles with the vicissitudes of going to school and living on her own. She shares her apartment with a more recent graduate and has been asked to consider serving on the school's board of directors. At the moment however she is looking for someone to have a cup of coffee with at a local restaurant.

Steve decides to go out by himself and climb the mountain in back of the school. The night is too cold for

people to be up there and he is eager to get away from the others for a while. Kris, one of the new students, asks him if he'd like some company and somewhat grudgingly he assents. His silence has been lost, but maybe they can get to know each other a bit better outside of the house.

John is agitated. His classes went fine but he constantly found himself wondering about his boss, and the $250 room and board limit. He knows of a party in town and is tempted to go out and do some drinking to clear his mind and numb the discomfort he is experiencing. He feels trapped and anxious.

Cindy checks in with him before she leaves at the end of her shift, and wishes him good luck tomorrow with his boss. Has he called yet? Does he have his alarm clock set? Did he speak to Steve about resetting it?

John isn't really hearing her, but is momentarily warmed by the sense that his future makes a difference - at least to her. "I've really gotta get out of this place; I'm gonna get kicked out anyhow, John blurts out inadvertently. Cindy slowly puts her knapsack down and, sitting down on the couch arm, asks him to explain.

While John is making a case for his inevitable demise in the program he also recalls the things he likes about it : the people, his special anger management class with Bob, the chance to earn some money....He stops as his thoughts bring him back to the problem at hand.

It is quiet for a moment in the music room until Steve and Kris boil up the stairs covered with snow from sliding

down the lower slopes of Mt. Battie. "It's snowing," they shout over the trebly tone of the Van Halen tape which John has quickly clicked on. Cindy and John look out the window at the silently swirling snow quietly blanketing the street below. The last tutor is leaving the house, having stayed after classes to play chess with Aaron.

The house is filled with eight students and two teachers. It is the forty fifth day of the term. Students are reckoning with both their futures and their past in their attempts to come to terms with the present which is theirs at the school. The house begins to feel the power of the winds which are shifting to the southeast and have blown up on to the porch, making the sign rattle a bit and lose a couple of extra chips of paint.

Before leaving for the night, Cindy has to confer with Dora, one of the school's co-directors, who will sleep at the school tonight. She relays her impressions that John, although in deep water, is not convinced that swimming is necessary. It's been a long day, and she is tired and glad to be going home. She has been teaching since she awoke at 7 a.m. and it is now 10:30.

Our 16-hour visit to the Community School has drawn to a close. Learning here does not fit into neat packages. It comes as life is lived from day to day, and as we make the choices which give our lives shape. The teaching staff is on hand as much to facilitate these choices as it is to create a useful and relevant lesson plan. The emphasis on the personal, the intimate human encounter,

results in an affective intensity and warmth which are singular.

It is our belief that by rekindling our students' faith in themselves and their capacity to trust others we have connected them to a more sustaining present and a more promising future.

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COALITION AS COMMUNITY
by Chris Mercogliano

This article will be one long-time NCACS member's attempt (I'm currently in my second year on the Board) to come to some understanding of where the coalition has been, where it finds itself now, and perhaps to come to a personal vision of where it could steer towards. To do this, I will be drawing extensively from the work of M.Scott Peck, particularly from his masterpiece on community, *The Different Drum*, as well as from Peck's mentor, Wilfred Bion, who did pioneering studies of group behavior at his Tavistock Institute in London. From Wilhelm Reich, a predecessor of both who made revolutionary discoveries about the nature of both individual and group function in the 1930's, 40's, and '50's, I will borrow the concepts, "contactlessness" and "the emotional plague", and I will be applying them to the recent, and to some unknown extent current, state of polarization within NCACS centered around the former executive director of the coalition.. I will also, where relevant, bring in the perspective of family therapist Salvador Minuchin, who helped develop the notion in the 70's that every family has a particular structure which enables it to maintain automatically its internal patterns of relating.

The scope of this article will be significant only if it is placed in a historical perspective. To this end, I will be taking from Paul Avrich's, *The Modern School Movement*,

for information on the early history of alternative education, and then from interviews with Dave Lehman, currently Director of the Alternative Community School in Ithaca, N.Y., whom I have unofficially appointed historian of the free school movement from the '60's on. Interwoven throughout will be my own personal observations, recollections and conclusions based on my attendance at recent board meetings and conferences, particularly last April's national conference in Oregon. My intention here will be only to make statements of my own experience and not to judge, characterize, or violate the confidentiality of others whom I may refer to in the course of telling the story from my point of view.

Finally, in looking to the future, I find myself deeply influenced by the words of quantum physicist David Bohm, who is now applying his fifty years of exploration in theoretical physics to the social and environmental problems which threaten our continued presence on this earth. It is Bohm's conclusion that our outdated western model of reality based on the mechanistic science of the last several hundred years lies at the heart of a deepening planetary crisis, and that relying on it only serves to keep both individuals and groups of all kinds apart. I share his conviction that our only hope is to continue to create ways of coming together through what he terms, "group dialogue."

According to *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth Edition,* the word coalition means, "the act of coalescing;" with coalesce defined as, "to grow together into

one body, to combine together into one body or community." In other words, a coalition is by definition an **active** process rather than a static institution. It involves growing and changing - **combining**. The importance of Webster's use of the word **body** must not be overlooked. Coalitions are more than just conglomerations of ideas or ideals. They involve bodies, which means they involve our feelings as well as all of our "stuff" that we each and every one of us bring to bear on our actions. Lastly, coalition means **community** - again, by definition. All of which brings me to an in-depth discussion of M. Scott Peck's, *A Different Drum: Community Making and Peace*."

I found myself moved to reread *A Different Drum* while travelling by train to the national conference in Oregon with a group of kids from our school (The Free School, in Albany, N.Y.) last April. It proved to be a powerful preparation for my participation in the many board meetings as well as for the five day conference as a whole. I had been all too aware of the doubts and mixed feelings that I was bringing to Oregon with me - not surprising, considering the painful and unresolved split which had occurred within both the membership and the board of NCACS during the previous year over whether or not to remove the member we had chosen for the position of National Field Coordinator. Peck's thoughts on community and peace seemed to speak directly to the situation at hand

From the outset, it was clear that I was not the only one who brought anger, fear, or mistrust to that first

conference board meeting. The feeling in the room was charged and cut right through the cold, clammy dampness that shrouded the first three days in Silver Falls. Fortunately, the NCACS president opened the meeting with the insistence that everyone put their hidden agendas on the table - an important piece of leadership undoubtedly prompted by her having also found herself at the center of the maelstrom for much of the past year - and everyone, it seemed, responded in good faith. My own agenda included anger towards all the key participants in the conflict for being either unwilling or unable to work the thing through, and toward the coalition president in particular, because of my belief that she had over time resorted to taking sides. By saying that to her directly, along with apologizing for a very angry letter that I had written her earlier, and then by being able to acknowledge to her that I realized the impossible difficulty of the role she had been asked to play, I was able to get clear with her and then continue.

How had this group - whose lives were dedicated to working with children in creative, compassionate, and humane ways and which had developed such a close-knit organization for mutual support - become so entangled in destructive and sometimes outright vicious infighting? was the question I wanted all of us to look at together. I announced that I saw no point in going ahead with any other coalition business until we had addressed this question and then had done whatever was possible to resolve the concerns of those who had been willing to attend the conference. I

was absolutely steadfast in my conviction that the problems we were faced with could not possibly be charged to any one individual, but were instead the responsibility of the entire coalition, and indeed the result of many unresolved areas - interpersonal, ideological, territorial, and so on - within the organization as a whole as well as a statement of the coalition's inability to deal with an internal conflict of such major proportions.

Peck begins *The Different Drum* with the statement that community is currently rare. On the other hand, it is a word that is constantly being devalued through its over-use in today's language. It is a phenomenon, like electricity or love, which defies a one-sentence definition. He compares genuine community to a gem and says that it can be defined only by describing its many facets, while sooner or later we get down to a core of mystery.

> If we are going to use the word meaningfully we must restrict it to a group of individuals who have learned how to communicate honestly with each other, whose relationships go deeper than their masks of composure, and who have developed some significant commitment to rejoice together, mourn together, and to delight in each other, making others' conditions our own.

Communities can have any number of forms and sizes, some being long-term and others only temporary in their duration. They can be centered around a shared location, e.g. a neighborhood or a dormitory; around a shared goal, e.g. a political action or a professional group; around a shared set of ideas or ideals, e.g. a religious group

- and perhaps NCACS would fit in here - or around the desire simply to learn about community, as is the case in the community-building workshops which Peck leads around the country, and so on. Ultimately, Peck concludes, the essence of community is a shared spirit, where a feeling of peace prevails, and yet where the members of a group in community will from time to time struggle. The struggles may become intense, but they will have a productive rather than a destructive effect.

Like true coalition, true community is extremely difficult to achieve today because of our relentless clinging to what Peck terms a "tradition of rugged individualism," whereby we value our independence above all else and are loathe to reveal our weaknesses, preferring instead to project an image of having it all together. The difficult reality is that there exists a constant tension between what Carl Jung called "individuation" - the result of a maturational process whereby we become our own fully autonomous selves - and the interdependence with others upon which our survival depends.

> So we are called to wholeness and simultaneously to recognition of our incompleteness; called to power and to acknowledge our weakness, called to both individuation and interdependence.

Thus the problem - indeed the total failure - of the ethic of rugged individualism is that it runs with only one side of this paradox, incorporates only one half of our humanity. It recognizes that we are called to individuation,

power, and wholeness. But it denies entirely the other part of the human story: that we can never fully get there and that we are, of necessity in our uniqueness, weak and imperfect creatures who need each other.

Peck includes these qualities in his model of community: emotional honesty, inclusivity (it's always easier for a group to exclude), a commitment and a willingness to coexist when the going gets rough - "communities are groups that learn to fight gracefully," - decision making by consensus, contemplation (each member has a responsibility to "know thyself"), and healing through the safety to reveal our vulnerability.

Certainly no one was consciously trying to apply Peck's model in that initial board meeting that I began describing earlier, and yet looking back it seems to me that we haltingly and intuitively covered the same ground. Our presence in itself indicated our commitment and as each of shared in turn what we had brought with us to the conference, there was mention of vulnerability in one form or another. We quickly laid down a set of ground rules for resolving conflicts: one member, with the support of the entire group would serve as "vibes watcher", staying attuned to the feeling in the room especially during periods of intense struggle. When sensing that there was only escalation on both sides and that all listening had stopped, the vibes watcher would call for a minute or two of silence, while everyone would reflected on their own feelings and experience of what had just happened. At the end of the

"time out", rather than launching headlong back into the fray, the discussion would begin with people sharing their reflections. There was also a general agreement to speak only for oneself, not to carry "unfinished business" out of the meeting and then engage in private conversations as a way of avoiding completing the issue, and we agreed to reach all decisions by consensus.

Interestingly enough, Peck states that genuine community is often initiated in response to crisis. He attributes the growth and success of Alcoholics Anonymous to their recognition of members being in a state of continuing crisis. Alcoholics refer to themselves as recovering, never as recovered. There was never any doubt among us as to whether or not this was a critical moment in the life of the coalition. Would it split into two or more separate organizations? Would long-term relationships be permanently severed? Was there any way to prevent the polarization from spreading further, or any way to heal the damage that had been suffered?

The words "community" and "communicate" come from the same root, Peck writes. The principles for good communication are the same as the ones for community, and because human beings have not yet learned how to talk to each other, we remain ignorant of the ingredients of genuine community. It seemed so evident to me that problems in communication, though certainly not the sole cause, were at the heart of the trouble between the National Field Coordinator and the NCACS members who had called for

his dismissal. To avoid generalizations, to speak personally, and to listen wholeheartedly are three of Peck's rules for communication, and all three appeared absent to me during the year or more of escalating anger and charges and counter-charges. Seldom had anyone spoken directly with the person they were upset with; there had been a great deal of second and third-hand message-carrying on both sides; and never had an attempt been made at a face to face resolution of the conflict.

Peck believes that in certain situations people may unconsciously stumble onto the rules of community, but since they don't consciously learn them, they tend to fall into and out of community without any control over the process. Groups that have lost the spirit of community sometimes try to regain it by what Peck calls, "enemy formation," engaging in mob psychology and creating a threat that would otherwise not exist. It is perhaps, he says, the most devastating form of human behavior. Individuals as well as groups indulge in it, and it is a sign of community decay and death. True community actually ceases at this point, as the group gradually becomes more and more exclusive in order to deal with the supposed "us against them" situation. Enemy formation is invariably a self-fulfilling prophesy, and eventually the imaginary enemy becomes an actual one. It is just such a process which I believe developed within the coalition during the past year.

It is not within the scope of this article, nor do I think it possible here in any case, to unpack the details of what

was done and said by and between the Field Coordinator and the others who became increasingly angry with him and how he performed his job. That rather large suitcase could only be handled by a face to face meeting between all those involved with the support of a loving group and perhaps an objective mediator. My concern is with the effect of this year of deteriorating trust upon the coalition itself. It is my belief that each of us who is concerned about what has already happened, what may still be happening, and what may well recur in the future if we fail to understand it, could do well to look at applying Peck's model to NCACS. And I would like to go still deeper at this point by examining both Wilhelm Reich's and Wilfred Bion's theories of group behavior as additional models for understanding the dynamics of ours.

Reich was a radical student of Sigmund Freud in the 1920's who developed his own school of psychotherapy based on principles such as the observation that a healthy sexuality is central to one's well-being and that repressed emotions are stored in the musculature of the body - which Reich called "armoring" - thereby placing far-reaching limitations on one's ability to live fully. Modern society, believed Reich, places increasing demands on the individual to deny his natural impulses - particularly sexual or aggressive ones - by suppressing the flow of energy in the organism by means of a stiff body or a rigid belief system, with the end result being a feeling of inner loneliness which he called "contactlessness." On more than one occasion

Reich was the object of a process where a group of blocked or "armored" people become envious and then destructive towards someone who is energetic and flows more freely than themselves. After being driven out of several European countries because of his attempts to change their policies towards the sexuality of adolescents in particular, Reich named this phenomenon, "the emotional plague," and said that it was unconscious and highly rationalized.

Based on his model of the human psyche which held that blocked natural sexual and aggressive impulses as well as repressed emotional expression resulted in the formation of a destructive "middle layer," he theorized that in groups, contactless people with potent middle layers would have a tendency towards banding together to act out their destructiveness - the mob psychology that Peck warns that groups are so prone to. Always there would be some form of social alibi, with the rationalization of a group ideology, as in the case of the Salem witch trials, or in today's "right to life" movement. In addition, and as was certainly true in his case, Reich noticed that the emotional plague often takes the form of a specifically sexual defamation, with people projecting their fear of their own sexuality onto someone whom they instinctively perceive to be more "alive" - freer emotionally - than themselves. Interestingly, Reich also noted that "plague reactions" often have a distinctively political element where the specter of communism or its opposite, McCarthyism, are raised.

Reich spoke almost exclusively in a language that he inherited from Freud; today perhaps the word creativity could be interchanged with the term sexuality. The parallels that I see between Reichian theory and NCACS are these: an energetic and creative leader, originally with the title of Executive Director, later redefined as National Field Coordinator, aggressively encouraged the growth and development of the coalition and was then singled out for, among other things, "redbaiting" other coalition members. The group of members who eventually called for his resignation had a very rational set of grievances - many of which I believed were of real substance - and yet in my mind, behaved quite irrationally - ultimately refusing to attempt a mediated settlement of the dispute. That this is a gross oversimplification of the situation should go without saying; nonetheless I think that there is a point worth considering here.

The study of the potentially irrational behavior of groups became the life work of Wilfred Bion, beginning with his service as a British military psychiatrist during the second world war. Within any group, according to Bion, two groups are actually present, which he named the "work group" and the "basic assumption group." On the one hand, the work group is an aggregation of individuals who come together to do something. In order to accomplish the agreed upon task, cooperation - which involves thought, maturity, and organization - is required. On the other hand, discovered Bion, in a group setting every adult has a

tendency to regress to "mechanisms typical of the earliest phases of mental life." Group members find themselves caught up in "emotional drives of obscure origins" which often get in the way of reaching the desired goal. In other words, the group within the group is represented by all of the feelings and motives existing outside of awareness that each member brings in with them.

Bion noted that sooner or later every group attempts to avoid its task by unconsciously agreeing on certain "basic assumptions," behaving as if they had a reason other than the stated one for being together. He labelled three different basic assumption groups: the dependency, the pairing, and the fight/flight group. "Alternative" groups in general are most prone to the latter, and it is that one which I think is most relevant to NCACS.

A fight/flight group is one that has begun to act as though its purpose is to either oppose something or to get away from it, or a combination of the two. The group depends on its leader to make sure there is something to fight or flee, and if that leader fails to do so, the group members may eventually turn on it as the cause of their anxiety. When flight is the predominant assumption, the group will tend to avoid troublesome issues and problems. When a group is in a fight mode, it will automatically assume that there must be either an external or an internal enemy. According to Peck, there is an inevitable stage in the growth of community where a group will start behaving like a bunch of amateur psychotherapists and preachers, all trying to heal and convert

the others, which invariably leads to a process of internal fighting, though individual members tend not to see it as such.

In any case, claimed Bion, every individual has a "valency" - the involuntary combination of one person with another for sharing and acting on a basic assumption. The key is for each of us to become aware of our particular valencies and then find a way to use them positively in order to accomplish the stated task. My most compelling valency is certainly the aforementioned healing and converting, arising from a childhood desire to be liked by everyone and have everyone around me be happy. This valency has the potential to enable me to play a valuable role in the group because of my drive to find a solution to the conflict, as well as the danger of my wanting to avoid the painful feelings involved, thereby preventing any true resolution from occurring. Very tricky indeed.

Once again, the parallels to NCACS are almost too numerous to mention. It will be most useful here, I think, to continue to look at the games that a group like NCACS can play with its leader and vice versa. In considering how it came to pass that the coalition chose to hold its national field coordinator responsible for its recent troubles, I am reminded of a precept of structural family therapy which holds that a family experiencing difficulty coping with its internal stress will tend to focus on one member as the "identified patient" within the therapy session. Hard as the therapist may try to shift the focus to the family as a whole,

there will always be a tendency for the others to blame the *problem* individual. Matters are complicated still further by the likelihood that the identified patient will unknowingly act out the dysfunctional aspects of the family as a whole. As I have said throughout this article, it is time for the NCACS family to do some careful self-examining.

The history of the alternative school movement, going well back into the nineteenth century, is the story of a succession of gifted and diverse individuals very few of whom ever managed to live out their ideals with each other for sustained periods of time. Originators of anarchist Modern Schools made numerous attempts to do this, organizing themselves into "colonies" with their schools at the center, only to see them dissolve - often sooner rather than later - because hardened schisms developed over recurrent themes that can traced to the present day: over political ideology; over the question of whether schools should be political and act as agents of social change, or non-political and internally democratic, controlled by the participants alone; and over educational philosophy - for example, a structured environment versus a non-structured one, intellectual learning versus experience-based learning; or coercion versus non-coercion. It should be noted that the schools and collectives that were adamantly participant-controlled like the Stelton School founded by Nellie Dick, who insisted that her students not be indoctrinated politically, were the longest lived. Nellie's school endured quietly into the early sixties when as, Paul Avrich points out

in The *Modern School Movement*, a "new" movement to create schools and communities outside of the existing social order sprang up, largely unaware of the rich history of its predecessors.

It didn't take long, according to Dave Lehman, an NCACS advisory board member and early leader in the sixties' and seventies' version of the alternative education movement, for the various dichotomies to heat up anew. Lehman recalls a "gathering" - they wouldn't be called "conferences" until things became more organized in the mid-seventies - in Northern California in 1968 or '69 sponsored by the *New Schools Exchange Newsletter*, at which John Holt and Jonathan Kozol squared off in a debate over the issue of whether or not schooling should be politicized. Kozol drew the line clearly in his book, *Free Schools*, insisting that schools become a means of radical social change; while John Holt steadfastly maintained his belief that it was radical enough to teach kids non-coercively, building instead on their innate creative potential and desire to learn, and that education should not become identified with any political movement. The same debate raged on in similar "gatherings" on the East Coast in places like Boston and Albany in the early seventies. I remember one that took place at a conference put on by The Free School at the State University of New York at Albany principally between Kozol and Herb Snitzer of the Lewis Wadhams School, which closely adhered to the Summerhill model.

Finally, at "The Education for Change" conference held in Chicago in 1975, the by-laws for an actual alternative education organization, to be called the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools, were written. Dave Lehman was a member of a small committee which worded the coalition's preamble and statement of purpose - currently a source of renewed debate - and remembers that the setting, as well as the composition of that by-laws committee, had a strong influence on the philosophy and structure adopted by the group at that time. Apparently, while the conference was proceeding, an event occurred which deeply affected its tenor: police in Chicago killed a Puerto Rican youth whose brother attended the alternative school which was hosting it. Lehman also reports that there was no representation on the committee by anyone who believed that education should be strictly non-political. The combination of these elements resulted in NCACS adopting a decidedly political orientation towards its function.

Lehman was able to recount for me numerous other examples of times and places where the many dichotomies of the alternative school movement arose in one form or another. My focus here, however, will remain on the political, since that is the one that I think contained the most explosive energy in the recent conflict which has brought the coalition to the splintering point. Along these lines Lehman remembers that at an NCACS board meeting in San Francisco eight or nine years ago, while serving on a committee this time to rewrite the by-laws, he came into a

certain amount of disagreement with another board member (who is currently NCACS president) over the anarchistic - "let's change the rules as the need arises" / democratic - "how we define ourselves is important in terms of the future" dichotomy. Lehman points out that no splitting occurred over the issue, everyone choosing instead to stay engaged in an on-going dialogue and - not without some fairly heated struggle - arrive at a mutually acceptable resolution, hugs and all. Such a scene as this brings me back to Peck's principles for community-building and community-maintenance.

Community, states Peck, is an alchemical process whereby a group is able to transcend its individual differences by acknowledging them and agreeing to accept them as they are, and only then to transform them into a powerful harmony . This mutual transformation cannot take place until the ground has been prepared.

According to Peck, there are four stages in the development of genuine community (not that every group that becomes a community follows this formula precisely): **Pseudo-community, Chaos, Emptying, and Community.** Pseudo-community refers to the initial response of the group to unconsciously try to fake intimacy and minimize the potential for conflict by speaking in generalities and concealing feelings, and by tacitly discouraging the expression of individual differences.

Chaos is an intermediate step where individual differences come out into the open, and the group moves to

obliterate rather than continue to conceal them. Repeated attempts are made to change and convert each other, to convince the others of the right idea or the right way. Chaotic fighting invariably breaks out as the healers and converters try harder to heal and convert while their victims get their fill and begin trying to heal and convert the healers and converters. Everywhere members can be found attacking each other as well as their leader. Eventually the group will become uncomfortable with this kind of unconstructive struggling and some form of "escape into organization" will occur as a response to the feeling of despair because the process seems to be getting nowhere. The alternative to organizing into committees, activities, etc. is the stage called Emptiness where the group decides, again unconsciously, that it is safe to let down individual defenses and reveal pain or anger as well as feelings of vulnerability or weakness. By emptiness, Peck means the removal of barriers to true communication. It is often a painful process - involving a series of little deaths or surrenders on the part of many individuals as well as a feeling of the whole group together approaching some kind of dying - and yet it is an absolutely necessary bridge between chaos and community.

It is Peck's profound belief, which I embrace wholeheartedly, that in any group which has formed to accomplish something together, community-building must precede problem-solving, and once a state of true community has been reached, it is imperative that the group remain open to continuing in a state of ongoing tension: over size,

structure, empowerment and leadership, inclusivity, intensity, commitment, individuality, task definition, and ritual. In other words, once created, a community needs to take on the additional responsibility of maintaining itself. Because of everyone's opposing drives to both be individuals and to belong, there will always be divisive anti-community forces at work. Therefore groups will naturally tend to flow into and out of states of real community. While external service may be a group's ultimate task, its first priority must be a shared awareness of its own state of community health along with a commitment to deal with problems as soon as they arise.

Reflecting again on the Oregon conference, I can see a great many examples of how we unknowingly and repeatedly bounced back and forth through Peck's four stages of community, sometimes skipping one or another of them. It seems to me that we bypassed Pseudo-community in that initial board meeting, in response both to the perceived crisis and to the firm leadership of the NCACS president. I would say that we then spent the next couple of days in a severe state of Chaos, breaking down into "feeling meetings" and "healing meetings," or just joining into conference activities like the trip to the hot springs at Breitenbush. Over and over, when the needed "emptying" would begin to occur, I observed the tendency of someone in the group to insist that we get on with or back to the agenda of that particular meeting, or announce that time was up, or if all else failed, just change the subject altogether.

One late-night session felt so deadening to me, with a core of people utterly determined to grind their way through coalition business, that I had to leave. The next morning, at the beginning of the final meeting of the outgoing board, I found myself muttering out loud that I thought that the whole thing was entirely hopeless and that we should all just go home. Once again, I found that I wasn't alone in my feeling.

Later that morning the emptying began again in earnest, with support for the process rippling through the group like a wave, and carrying over into the evening session as well. We were able to mourn together with the outgoing National Field Coordinator; the conference coordinators felt safe to fully express their frustration over what they felt to be a lack of support for their efforts to put on a successful conference; a former board member who is no longer associated with an alternative school gave voice to his fear that he no longer had any standing within the coalition, and even left in anger when he felt that the group was only avoiding the issue that he repeatedly raised regarding power and empowerment within the organization - then returning to find that, much to his amazement, there was a great deal of agreement for his position.

It was absolutely tangible when the emptying was complete and we had reached the level of community: the atmosphere in the room began to sparkle. When we finally agreed as a group to "get back to business," we cut cleanly through the remaining agenda like a hot knife through butter.

At the closing membership meeting, one older coalition member noted aloud that never before had he seen such a large and diverse group of children coexist so peacefully for such a long period of time - all while many of the coalition's older students and adults were so busy thrashing out the skills needed for building the community that was able to so lovingly contain their energy.

Maintaining such a community, I realize - and Peck so painstakingly points out - is no small task. Certainly matters are further complicated by the fact that the coalition is a very large group which is also wide spread geographically, and the opportunities for meeting in person are few. Nevertheless, I believe that the potential for NCACS to exist as a form of genuine community is a reality and not some naive fantasy; indeed, I believe that it is a necessity if we are to be a truly effective force either for each other or in the world; and I believe that the experience in Oregon confirms this. What is called for now is for the entire coalition to make community - maintenance a first priority, and to develop creative solutions to its unique problems of numbers and geographical size.

In closing, I would like to turn towards the future, borrowing freely from the recent writings of quantum physicist, David Bohm. As did M. Scott Peck with the concept of community, Bohm takes the overworked term "holistic" to its source. All parts of the universe are fundamentally interconnected, forming an unbroken flowing whole, claims Bohm, while continuing to extend the work of

the late Danish physicist, Niels Bohr, who in the 1920's coined the phrase "quantum wholeness," by which he meant that the world of the atom is seamlessly interwoven - not a mere collection of independent parts as was previously believed by western science. This seemingly radical proposition, once almost categorically rejected in the West as being "mystical," or left wing, or too far out, is now being empirically confirmed in practically every branch of modern research.

Moved to apply his quantum theories to the field of human relations, Bohm forged a lasting friendship with the Indian philosopher, Jiddu Krishnamurti, who maintained that all relationships must be viewed holistically because the cosmos has no fundamental divisions. Each individual consciousness is a manifestation of the whole of human consciousness, with all its history, perceptions, and interactions with nature. In the mid-sixties, Bohm came out with the concept, "implicate order," meaning that consciousness is woven implicitly into all matter and matter is woven out of consciousness. For example: on an atomic level, paired particles separated in space appear able to communicate with other - as in experiments with superconductivity where electrons at very low temperatures begin to move in unison, even around obstacles in the material in which they are travelling; on an individual level, the state of mind affects the health of the body and vice versa; and on the societal level, where we are in grave trouble, wracked by divisions between groups and

individuals and between humankind and nature, because we fail to realize our interconnectedness, relying instead on an outdated Newtonian model which held that the universe is a like a machine comprised of separate, unrelated parts. We cling tenaciously to our differences, refusing to acknowledge that this "unconscious metaphysical assumption" is the very source of the problem.

The end result of this fragmented world view, according to Bohm, is that people and groups think of themselves as separate atoms, failing to realize their affect on the whole. When their views conflict, as in the abortion dilemma, the two sides are unable to communicate with each other, both blind to the larger picture: and each, instead, perceiving the other to be basically evil. We even end up with a situation where the groups with the highest social ideals end up merely adding to "the general cacophony of organized groups vying to solve the world's problems."

The solution, Bohm believes, involves applying the quantum mechanics of superconductivity to the realm of human interaction:

> If you have a large number of particles at low temperature, each particle will be governed by a common pool of information. It's like dancers on a stage who share a common pool. But, as the temperature rises, this pool breaks up until there is practically only one pool per particle. So all the particles seem independent and tend to act independently, bouncing off each other at random. The holistic aspect only comes out when you lower the temperature.

The need today is for people to learn to "lower the temperature," to establish through a process of dialogue a kind of social superconductivity, where people begin to suspend their own beliefs and listen to other people's, so that everybody's beliefs are held by the group as a whole, thereby creating Bohm's common information pool. Dialogue lowers the temperature enough that when one person listens to another, what they say becomes part of that other. Bohm writes that

> We need a kind of social enlightenment to take place. In the past people have developed ways to foster individual enlightenment, a higher intelligence for the individual through meditation, or mystical insight, or what-have-you. But we haven't worked on ways to develop a higher social intelligence.
> To do that you need a situation in which people can talk together freely without a specific agenda or purpose to guide the proceedings, and you need a group large enough to develop a number of subcultures. If two people get together with different views, they will generally avoid the real issues. They will protect their separate information pools by avoiding connections that will agitate them. But when you have twenty or thirty people, there are bound to be subgroups wherein those deeper issues will come up. It's not controllable anymore. Eventually the dialogue is going to touch an individual's non-negotiable assumptions, which will liberate high energy.

For Bohm, dialogue is perhaps the last chance for humanity to turn around the devastating effects of the deadly, spreading fragmentation of human consciousness on the planet.

I have chosen to focus primarily on the work of Peck and of Bohm because both men propose virtually the same solutions to the problems of NCACS - which ultimately are merely a reflection of those of the larger society - and each uses a quite different idiom to describe it, each arriving at it from a seemingly separate area of expertise. Call it community, or coalition, or dialogue: regardless of its name, the process needed to enable us to insure that our children reach their full potential, which is their birthright, does not come easily to us. Much struggle and many hard lessons are required; yet we must, I believe, honor this process of mutual transformation because our children are the future of the earth.

Chris Mercogliano has been a teacher at The Free School in Albany, New York, since 1973, is currently co-director of the school and has been a member of the Board of NCACS for two years. He is also a father of two, a Reichian therapist, a mason, a plumber, a carpenter and an organic gardener.

PHILOLOGY
by Gene Lehman

Let us study words not war:
Wars smoulder when words wound.
Wars slink in under lies,
Wars erupt when words fail.

Let us turn our sword into words:
Let us abolish bullets for a barrage of words,
Let us banish bombs for expansive words,
Let us not toy with death but play with living words.

The sword is mightier than any words,
Some say.
I say

The only thing mightier than a word is silence.
Darkness prevails when stifled words cry out in pain.
Death is a word not lightly spoken.

Wise words are full of life.
Loving words give life.
Let there be life....
Let our words mean what we say.
Let love of words be love unlimited.

REALITY AND THE ROSE CURTAIN... OWNING YOUR ANGER
by Mary Leue

John P.[John Patenaude, founder of the *K(onference) O(n) (Alternatives) Newsletter,* ed.] writes me that Jonathan Kozol's book, *Free Schools,* came in for some heavy shit at the recent [1972, ed.] free schools conference in New Orleans. My reactions to this news are numerous and powerful. Mostly, they relate to what Larry and Michelle Cole [Co-directors of LEAPschool in New York City, ed.] said in their review of *Free Schools* in the last *KOA Newsletter.* They said it so vividly, I can only repeat what they said, for the benefit of any who missed the issue, and because it needs to be said over and over and over:

> We are in a time when adults are running away from the problems around them and wondering while they run, panting, why the little ones are so fucked up. Some people, when they've stopped running long enough, have started up some schools as a kind of cover for their rear... The movement into purity and innocence has become the absurd luxury of the leisure class, too afraid of its own rage to look at it squarely and use the education they find so worthless and guilt provoking to make the world better. . . Kozol... is outraged at people,who run away... He has taken a position that it is NOT okay with him for people to go do their own thing. In the process, we understand, he has lost a lot of "friends."
>
> When you move from the emotional to the political, from the self-conscious to the overview, from the self-centered to the responsible, you are bound to lose a lot of friends. Junkies who try to kick find that truth every day; people they used to know and run with just don't like them anymore.

Personal change, when it threatens to expose and change others is the most dangerous virus of all. A lot of free school people like any other so called "movement" people would like to be left alone with their fantasies. Kozol speaks eloquently about their nakedness.

One of my favorite people has always been Robert Lindner. You never seem to hear about his stuff any more, but to me, his writings were prophetic. In his *Prescription for Rebellion,* published in 1952, and again, in *Must You Conform?,* 1956, he pointed to the epidemic growth of sociopathy, the disease of Mass Man, a disorder of the moral dimension of the personality which renders its victim incapable of commitment, a passive mutineer with energy only for immediate gratification without identity, and violent when the superficial stability of his self-image receives a blow he can't duck. This to me sounds exactly like Jonathan's "some very fine and terrifying breed of alienated human beings." Like it or not, his image of the sandbox for the children of the SS guards on a hillside outside Auschwitz will be with us for a long time. And too, 1984 is only twelve years away!

The point Jonathan, Larry and Michelle, Lindner, Orwell, and the rest of us who KNOW we are angry and are trying to harness that anger to get on with the job are saying is, I think, look, for God's sake. There is a real enemy out there. Oh, no, it's not the bureaucrat at the Welfare office who makes the policy that checks are being cut this week. It's not the landlord who refuses to panel the basement apartment where the baby eats sweet chips off the peeling

walls because he expects the mother to stop the baby. No, it's not the clinical psychologist who confirms the principal's statement that Gary is too dangerous to be in school who's to blame. No, nor the cheapshit furniture dealer who sells that defective refrigerator to one customer after another and tries to blame them for breaking it! No, it's not the president of IT&T, or Nixon, or your own ward heeler, or the Chief of Police, or anyone else. And that's why you get so angry, and why the anger has GOT to be owned before it can be harnessed. But you can't even BEGIN to get on with the job of owning your anger, which is so hard it takes a lot of supportive people around you who are doing the same thing, until you can stop running away from it and turn and face it! No, not snarl at the people who blow your cover, like the Jonathans, the clear-eyed ones who see through your defenses. But turn around and take a look within at the white-hot furnace that glows and seethes and is where you, the real you, lives and comes from, comes out of.

We've had the Iron Curtain, the Bamboo Curtain, all sorts of curtains. This one, I guess, would be the Rose Curtain. People who have to wear sunglasses strike me as hiding behind it. I think the fear is that what one would find who lifted that curtain would all be nasty and cruel and frightening and ugly, like the physical surroundings of the ghetto, like the image of the rapist and the purse snatcher and the child molester and the killer who kills for the sake of killing. The curtain we drop between the suburbs and the inner city mirrors with near exactitude the actual inner split

which exists within the souls of the victims of the Rose Curtain.

It is as though we project a literal external image upon those we fear and then force them to conform to that image, a forcing which extends even into the souls of the dwellers within the curtain so that they themselves embody through the shared fantasy the belief which they enact in their own lives. And all of us are victims of the mirage, dwellers within its shadowy rose-colored depths.

Like the poor Irish peasants during the potato famine who pointed to the shriveled bit of meat under the glass in the center of the table as they gnawed on their last remaining bits of rotten potato, creating in their hunger-sharpened imaginations the savory taste they craved in reality, we all want to turn our eyes away from the glass shards and dogshit on the broken sidewalks, the begging eyes at dirty windows far above the street, the spilled-out garbage which lies all winter under the blackened snow and then reappears in the spring, and turn them toward apple blossoms, daffodils, the delicate tracery of spring leaves against a pale blue sky, toward everything which is lovely and lifts the spirit and away from all that is heavy and drags it down.

Furii, the therapist in *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden,* who is said by some to have been patterned on Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, one of my favorite models of womanhood, says to herself about Deborah, the schizophrenic girl she is working with: if only she could tell her about reality, the real world, how much better it is than the illusory one Deborah has created! I guess I'd like to say something like that to the people who are putting down Jonathan's book. Not to have to shut out part of reality because it is painful, or ugly, or frightening is the most wonderful experience in the world. Whenever I find myself able to face that part of myself that wants to run away, I get such a rush of energy, such joy, such a will to summon up the courage it takes to make some inroads into one of the problems that have been lying heavy on my soul like a lump

of undigested meat in my stomach! It makes all the pain, the anxiety, the worry about being rejected by people you need approval from, all the shit it takes to stay in there and keep at the job, all that seem trivial.

Because there is so much joy, so much life, so much pleasure in small things to be found everywhere when you can begin to enjoy it! The little girl who used to emerge from her house with a barely suppressed cry and a fist near her eye just in case, and who came down the steep steps one foot at a time, holding on fearfully - now she dances down the steps and hops into the car, giving you a joyous swat as she comes, spewing you with soggy doughnut from her mouth as she laughs at your expression. Her mother shouts out the window to you and finally appears at the door in her bathrobe, holding out a $5 food stamp, smiling and reassuring you that she can manage without it. Nothing needs to be said except friendly greeting and thanks. You are friends. She trusts you, you trust her. It makes your day!

Jesse, the bumbling, dog-faced bully twice the size nine years ought to be, Jesse who was thrown out of two classes for the emotionally disturbed and several parochial schools before that; Jesse, the boy of whom his uncle says, "We think he's the only child who was ever thrown out of Headstart;" Jesse, the boy who was convicted of rape when he was five! - Jesse, who once told you that God loves everybody - dials his own home number and speaks softly into it as You stand with your arm around him, "Mamma, I can read! Yes I can, ask Mary! No, I ain't foolin' you. I

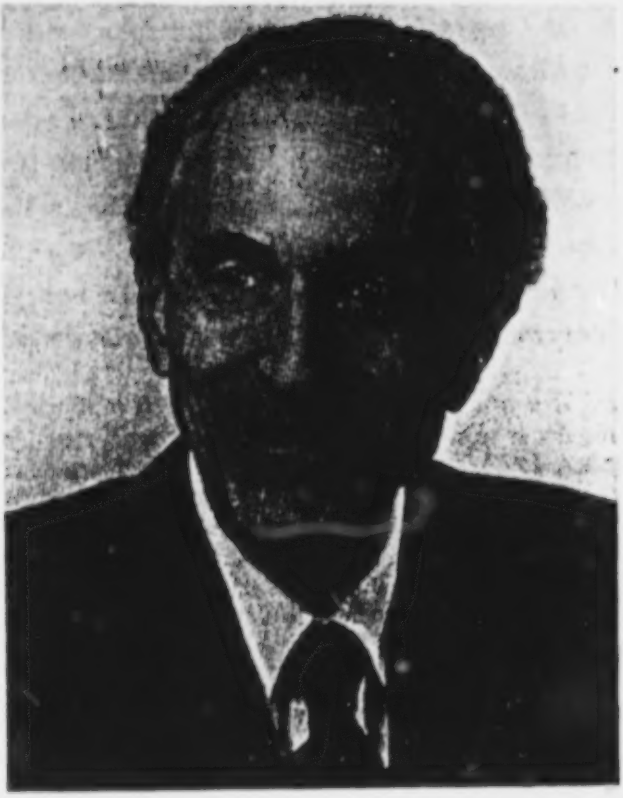
read two books!" You exchange happy glances and he gives you a seraphic smile as he listens to his mother's response. Wow!

Let's see. New Orleans. Hmm. We used to live in Texas. I think they're about the same relative distance from the Megopolis of the Northeast and from Cuernavaca, Mexico. I remember feeling a lot closer to Cuernavaca than to New York City in those days. Could this have any relevance to the strength of the reaction against Jonathan's book? Craig Newberger, an Antioch student who was a teacher at our school from September through December, has just arrived back from a three-month stint at CIDOC.

He liked Ivan Illich very much, both as a person and as an ideologue, but said of him that he was so out of touch with the reality of American life that he would say things like, "Deschooling has become a fad, now, and nobody believes that schools will last any more." In the sense in which he means it, i.e., the higher bullshit among "in" people at some of the universities, this is true. But it is as relevant to real life in our country as the endless conversations Jonathan mentions "about 'institutional revolution' over sirloin steaks and good red wines at small French restaurants in Harvard Square.." It is not the persons of ideologues nor even their ideas which anger Jonathan, and which anger me. It is the frustration engendered in the face of one's recognition of the depth of the infantile illusion which truly believes that, "Where I am, here is the center of the universe."

And no, the real center is not inside Ivan Illich's head, nor is it inside CIDOC in Cuernavaca, anymore than it is inside the Learning Center in South Boston or the Free School in Albany or LEAPschool in New York! It is within the soul of each of us, within that part which is a part of every living thing, and ultimately, of every atom and sub-particle within the atom and within the Universal Soul which informs each microcosm and the spaces between. We ARE a part of the whole, whether we like it or not. And must begin to find that center within us, or else we shall all truly perish!

NOTE: This article by the editor of ΣΚΟΛΕ is reprinted from the ***New Schools Exchange Newsletter*** *for November, 1972. It was written at a time when organized alternative education was undergoing our first historical crisis. Its frequent use of the vernacular is to be read as a part of the context of the anarchistic phase of our history. The purpose in reprinting it at this time is your editor's belief that it is good to look back at times like these, lest, by ignoring our history we doom ourselves to repeat it. Ed.*



David Hamburg, President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, believes that education must provide a global outlook to equip today's children to cope with tomorrow's world.

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CONFRONTING A VIOLENT PAST TO CHART FUTURE PEACE
by David Hamburg

Physician, behavioral scientist and educator, David Hamburg heads the Carnegie Corporation of New York, a philanthropic foundation established in 1911 by American steel magnate Andrew Carnegie. Under Dr. Hamburg's leadership, the foundation has launched major projects concerned with the avoidance of nuclear war, advancing science education and solving critical problems of adolescent development.

Author of more than 150 scientific papers, Hamburg is a former president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and former chairman of the psychiatry department at Stanford University's School of Medicine. While at this post, he went to east Africa and successfully negotiated the release of four of his students who had been kidnapped from primatologist Jane Goodall's Gombe Research Center in Tanzania by guerillas.

Editor Mary Batten interviewed Dr. Hamburg in his New York office.

What do you consider the most important educational challenges that face us today?

The most difficult challenge all over the world is to reach children in poor communities and to get education off to a good start, even before children go to school. Literacy, numeracy and a sense of scientific problem-solving are the fundamental underpinnings of education for everybody, rich and poor alike. Another challenge concerns the content of education - the basic knowledge required in a world being transformed as rapidly as ours. This should include some kind of preparation for participation in a modern economy that is interdependent worldwide. It should also provide a

world outlook and some understanding of biological diversity and the richness of human differences. A world outlook is part of the content that we've never had in education before, and I think we'll have to develop it in the next century.

You have spent a great part of your career studying aggressive behavior in human and non-human primates. Is violence an inevitable human tendency that we simply have to accept?

Violence has been a part of human evolutionary history for many millennia, but we can't accept it. We can't be complacent about it. For the most part, violence is learned. It's easy to learn to hate, to justify violence and to act in violent ways. But there are certain things that are new against the background of what's old. What's old is a heritage of readiness to form prejudices. Worldwide the content is different but the basic form of antagonism, particularly around in-group/out-group distinctions, is very similar at the tribal level, the national level, the religious level, and the political level. You learn to identify with your own group, "the good guys." You learn to be suspicious about some other groups. That's old behavior.

What's new is the destructive power of our weaponry, not only nuclear, but also conventional, biological and chemical. The advance of science and technology that makes possible our abundance and prosperity also adds enormously to our destructive power.

We never had the capacity to make the whole Earth miserable or, perhaps, even to extinguish our species. We

simply couldn't do it before, no matter how violent we were in spots around the world. Now we have that capacity.

In addition, the advances of telecommunication have made it fairly simple to rapidly spread a kind of contagion of justifications for violence - who to hate and how to hate.

So our long heritage of readiness to learn and act violently now occurs in a radically different context than it ever did before. We simply can't be complacent and say, "Well, it's always happened. It will happen again." If it happens again and again in the next century, we will see disasters far beyond anything that we have ever known, perhaps even a totally extinguishing catastrophe. To avoid that, we've got to come to terms with our heritage in new ways.

Why do young adolescent males in particular have such a pronounced tendency toward violence?

There is probably some biological basis that inclines young male adolescents toward aggressive behavior. You see it in a large variety of nonhuman primates, and you see it in many different human societies. To some degree, the influence of the rapidly changing sex hormones on the brain and on behavior must play a role, with cultural influences shaping the tendency toward aggression.

Historically, a lot of that aggression has been channeled into military roles, preparation for warfare and warfare itself. That was a culturally acceptable outlet, however destructive it might be. There was also a good deal of tolerance in many cultures for some degree of rough stuff

by adolescent males as part of growing up: "Boys will be boys."

But the problem is much more complicated now. We need to channel that tremendous energy of adolescent males in socially constructive ways that don't involve violence. Sports can give such opportunity on a large scale, provided the activities are organized in ways that do not foster violence.

Is this something our educational institutions will have to address very deliberately?

Educational and other institutions will have to address it. Right now, aside from the historical military factors that still exist, there are other factors that tend to exacerbate that problem and not only with adolescent males. One is violence in the media, especially television and movies which provide all kinds of attractive models of punitive problem-solving by violently eliminating some problem from the scene. The media also provide a good deal of direct tutelage on how to conduct violent operations.

Another exacerbating factor is drug-related crime, amounting in some places to a kind of warfare.

Young people, not just males, tend to be very energetic, often idealistic, and have a great need to assert themselves, to show some competence, and to earn some respect. If you could channel those tendencies into community service from adolescence through college and beyond - military service being a part of it, but also a variety of domestic and international services like the Peace Corps -

you would have constructive outlets for that energy and, to some degree, for the aggressiveness of young people, especially males. Those would be important institutional responses. So far, institutional response in most parts of the world seems meager and inadequate.

Are there any cultures that have successfully channeled this tendency toward violence in constructive ways?

There are elements of it in many cultures, but some are probably more successful than others. For example, three centuries ago, the Scandinavian countries were among the most violent in the world. Today, they're among the most peaceful. What made that possible in three centuries is really worth scrutinizing.

You once said that "the capacities for attachment and violence seem to be fundamentally connected." What did you mean?

In the first few years of life, a bond is formed between the child and one or more caretaking adults. The way they interact with each other gives the young, growing child a sense of security - if it goes well - a secure base from which to explore the environment. A secure base is essential to cognitive stimulation and later to learning in school.

As the child grows older, the attachment is enlarged and transferred to some extent from the immediate family to a kind of primary group beyond the family - a religious group or a community or national group.

That identification with a primary group can be very strong, supportive and sustaining. It gives hope, a perception of opportunity and a set of fundamental beliefs

that guide behavior during the years of growth and development. All that's very positive. But - and it's a big but - the development of that primary group attachment often carries with it some denigration of one or more out-groups. Either everybody else is bad, or some particular out-groups are bad.

In the extreme case, we're prepared to fight and die for the group we believe in - religion, nation-state, family, or gang. Often such violence is not thought of so much in terms of hatred as of devotion to that primary group. So altruism and aggression have a very strong connection which goes back a long way in human evolutionary history.

The positive side is that these secure attachments can be of enormous importance in learning and shaping adult behavior. Such attachments can, and I believe they must, go more and more in the direction of learning what other groups are really like. We need to give up the traditional posture of profound suspicion and even hatred of other groups and learn to respect one's in-group without harsh deprecation of out-groups.

Do you think that people are psychologically ready for a broader identification with the human species?

It's very hard. There's every reason to believe that our species evolved in small familiar, slowly changing societies over many millennia. It's only quite recently that we've zoomed beyond small, familiar, slowly changing societies to large, unfamiliar, heterogeneous, rapidly changing societies. That, in a way, is at the center of all that

we're discussing. The world has undergone a radical transformation since the Industrial Revolution and is still undergoing that transformation.

The psychology of it is very difficult. In an evolutionary sense, we have probably been selected to form attachments with a familiar few. Certainly, historically, we've been shaped by the assumption that the familiar few and the small community would give us the basis for living. The idea of shifting from those primary loyalties to a much wider one is difficult.

Still, I see some hope. We've come a long way - both for better and for worse. We've enlarged our scope of identity from the immediate family and small, village-type community to larger regions, particularly to nation-states. We see a good many people who've now become, in some sense, citizens of the world. They speak several languages. They have broad contacts in different countries. They're deeply respectful of people from different cultures who have different ways of life. They see fundamental human similarities in cross-cultural differences.

Those citizens of the world give me hope that it is possible, though not easy, to learn to identify with the whole human species. In the next century, we'll have to do that or we won't survive. We have prodigious learning capacities which we use to do fantastic things, like the conquest of space. We can use those capacities to learn to identify with the whole human species worldwide and with the survival of the whole planet.

There are two beginnings of wisdom in the Nuclear Era. One is the brute facts of the consequences of nuclear war. The other is the risks of accidental or inadvertent nuclear war.

What are some of the factors that may help people develop a global consciousness?

There's been a lot of interesting research over the last several decades on what are called "superordinate goals" as a way of bringing people together and resolving conflicts. Superordinate goals are those which are terribly important to each side in a conflict and which can only be achieved if both sides cooperate.

Avoidance of nuclear war is certainly a superordinate goal. As a very practical matter, we and the Soviets and increasingly other nuclear powers are recognizing that we have to take steps in arms control and crisis prevention. We have to take steps in the general improvement of international relations, and we have to take steps in resolving regional conflicts to minimize the likelihood of nuclear war.

In the future we may come to see environmental problems also as a superordinate goal. We have to cooperate in order to prevent irreversible damage to the environment. It's not yet as vivid as nuclear explosions, but it may get to that point before long.

Do you feel that disarmament is feasible?

We certainly could have a nuclear deterrent balance at far lower levels than we have now. It would be a great achievement if we could get the levels well below half of what we now have. And not just the U.S. and the Soviets. It

requires vigorous attention to preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, especially to terrorist groups.

Are more nations willing to think about disarmament?

We and the Soviets certainly are. The United States and the Soviet Union have looked into the abyss more deeply than many other nations. I can't honestly say that I find that to be a worldwide phenomenon. It is, to some degree. But there's also a lot of complacency around the world, a lot of unwarranted assumptions about how we can manage nuclear weapons, and still some assumptions about the political benefits of nuclear weapons. So we have a long way to go.

What do people need to know about the nuclear issue to make them think differently about it?

One is the brute facts of the consequences of nuclear war. The other is the risks of accidental or inadvertent nuclear war. On the facts: we've never had a metric scale of destruction like this before. We've had terrible wars, but we have to grasp that all the previous wars are child's play compared to nuclear war. It seems far-fetched to say it, and yet it's absolutely true; World War I, World War II, the Vietnam War, etc., resulted in a modest scale of damage. We've never had a metric where hundreds of millions of people would be killed in a few hours' time.

It's almost impossible to grasp. We have to accept the fact that for the first time in the history of the species, we are not permitted one serious mistake. We can't learn from our errors in this field.

The psychological block to be overcome is people's tendency to say, "Well, now that we grasp the consequences, surely nobody in his right mind will start a nuclear war. No responsible, rational leader would start a nuclear war." True, but you can't always assume that leaders will be forever responsible and rational. There are irrational components in leadership. There are tremendously corrosive effects of prolonged stress, like a nuclear crisis, on leadership decision-making.

Another problem is that with thousands of weapons all over the world and thousands of people involved in handling them at any given time, mistakes could be made. There are many pathways to accidental, inadvertent expansion of conflict into the nuclear realm. That point has to be understood by the public.

Are there other problems that are also unprecedented in the history of our species?

We've never had so many people before, and those people have at their disposal technology that is far more powerful, both for better and for worse, than anything we've ever had before. So the combination of the vast numbers of people and the vast power of technology creates a variety of unprecedented situations.

On the positive side, it creates a capacity to have decent education and health for almost everybody in the world, which we couldn't achieve before. It creates the real possibility of a degree of material prosperity that far transcends anything the world had known before. Ordinary

citizens can have opportunities that kings and queens never had in the past.

The other side of the coin is that there are unprecedented dangers - the destructive capacity of weapons, and also the capacity, however inadvertently, to destroy the environment.

It sounds as if in spite of all the technological advances that exist, we're still behaving in ancient ways that are inappropriate.

In many ways, we are. It's useful to think of ourselves as an ancient species in a modern world. Our biology hasn't had much time to change since the Industrial Revolution. Our bodies, including our brains, are very largely shaped by millions of years of evolution prior to these few generations since modern technology burst upon the scene and transformed the world.

We have a very natural, human emotional attachment to customs and institutions that served us well at an earlier time. And we're not at all sure what would work better. So there are important lags in customs and institutions as we try to grope toward adapting to this hypermodern world.

How would you order an agenda of priorities that individuals and nations should address?

The nuclear danger is so extreme that it has to have the highest priority. If we fail in that, we fail in everything. Utilization of human learning capacities for meeting basic human needs would be my next fundamental priority. Our learning capacities are what got us to this point of human evolution. We're not the strongest or the fastest or the most

specialized species, but we are awfully intelligent. We have learning capacities that have been nurtured during the long years of growth and development. In the modern world, that really means well-organized, sustained, long-term education of a kind that meets natural human curiosity halfway. It means research and development so that we can use science and technology not to serve our ancient predisposition for violence but for constructive human purposes.

For more information, contact the Carnegie Corporation of New York, 437 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10022.
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RACHEL AND HER CHILDREN
by Jonathan Kozol

Jonathan Kozol

Jonathan Kozol does his best to keep cool while writing about homeless children. He tries to keep *cool* while reporting that there are some 500,000 of them in this wealthy land, a number slightly greater than the population of Atlanta, Denver or St. Louis. He tries to keep cool while reporting that federal support for low-income housing dropped from $28 billion to $9 billion between 1981 and 1986 and that legal evictions in New York City during one recent year totaled nearly half a million. He tries to keep cool while reporting that although New York owns more than 100,000 units of empty low cost housing, it squanders $2,000 or more per family per month on squalid welfare hotels, and that the largest such hotel in New York is operated by (irony of ironies) South African "investors."

Kozol has greater trouble keeping cool when he actually goes into the Martinique Hotel, once a fashionable establishment on Manhattan's Herald Square, and starts

talking with some of the 1,400 children (400 families) crammed in there. Like the girl he calls Angie, who is twelve and already skilled at fending off the men who want to buy her. "I may be little but I have a brain." she tells Kozol. He likes her. "She's alert and funny and... I enjoy her skipping moods," he writes. One day he learns that after her mother's welfare check failed to arrive, Angie was caught stealing food from the supermarket and was brought home in handcuffs. "When I came to this hotel I still believed in God," the mother tells Kozol. "I said: 'Maybe God can help us to survive.' I lost my faith. My hopes. And everything. Ain't nobody - no God. no Jesus - gonna help us - no way."

Perhaps the most terrible of all these terrible stories is that of Holly Peters, 24, who was raised in foster homes and worked for a time as a waitress, got married, went broke, lived on the dole. She was so run-down when her son Benjamin was born that he weighed only 4-2 lbs.: he survived in an oxygen tent, receiving blood injections. During that hospital stay, he contracted a viral infection that left him partly blind, deaf, hydrocephalic, brain damaged. After three months, the hospital released him and told Holly to give him phenobarbital when he had seizures. She took him to a welfare hotel near Times Square. Five weeks later she was evicted. She says it was because she wanted her husband to stay with her, which is against the rules. Holly and the baby slept several nights in the offices of the welfare bureaucrats.

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The baby was having so many seizures by now that she took him back to the hospital. The doctors operated on him. inserting a shunt into his skull to relieve the pressure on his brain, then released him again. "It was evenin', like about four-thirty, five o'clock," Holly recalls, "and we was walkin' in the street. It was rainin', as a matter of fact. Not a warm night." Several days later Holly was still wandering around with her dying baby, being sent from hotel to hotel. "The place the shunt went in, his wound had gotten bad," she tells Kozol. "It was sunk in and you could see his skull. His eyes was sinkin' too."

In a sense, Kozol is not being fair in his passionate presentation of these tragedies. Even the word homeless is a bit misleading in that it implies people sleeping on the streets in the snow, while Kozol is really writing about welfare cases, about the poor, whom ye have with you always. And all those he interviews are invariably the virtuous and the innocent - the others presumably do not give interviews. But Kozol is not really trying to be fair. An award-winning gadfly of the Boston schools where he once taught *(Death at an Early Age, Illiterate America).* he is trying to assault and appall his readers, to jar them from their complacent acceptance of the young beggars on their doorstep. To some extent, he succeeds in arousing anger. He quotes Robert Coles as saying that these are times when people "have to throw up their hands in heaviness of heart ... and say, in desperation: God save them, those children; and for allowing such a state of affairs to continue, God save us too."

Well, yes, that sounds fine, but what is actually to be done? One icy morning in New York last month, the frozen bodies of two newborn babies were found in trash heaps in different parts of the city. Neither one had a name. The newspapers devoted no more than a few lines to the story.

—By *Otto Friedrich*

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CONSUMERISM AS A DEADLY ART
by Charlene Liberata

The journey from the bottom of the staircase in my grandparent's cellar to the old playroom took me through the dark, dirty furnace room, a space seemingly without light or draft in which I never tarried. Even the playroom itself was rather cold and uncared for but it had windows and ten children's worth of toys to discover and ponder. They were relics from another time made of materials which were faded and worn but often well kept. Many of the games had all the pieces intact, books were aged but whole and some were things I'd never encountered before. It was like visiting a museum except that we were allowed to touch and use and, as I said, ponder. I was definitely a ponderer and was fascinated by the idea that my mother and her siblings had played with these toys, many of which, on the one hand, were very much like mine, and on the other, were from another world.

It was here, one day, that I found the melted dolly. One side of her face and one arm were badly disfigured, even grotesque. I felt scared by her appearance but I was also sad, and compassionate projection took over. I decided to take care of her and in my innocence and open heartedness brought her upstairs to take her home. I wasn't prepared for the reaction that I received from the adults in my life. They were shocked and alarmed at my identifying with such damaged goods. "You don't want her. She's all broken. You have lots of nice dolls. Why don't you throw

her away." I bought it and left her there. She was never there again. Somehow, coming out of that cellar was like coming from another reality. Down there she was totally mine, but up above, surrounded by the voices of the values that I was used to living by, my resolve melted like the rubber on the doll's body. My face fell and I gave in.

It wasn't until recently that I realized that although I never saw that doll again, neither did I actually leave her behind. She was a part of me that I recognized, and no matter what anyone said, I simply put her aside for another time, a safer time. There was no way to throw her away. I had brought her into my heart and then closed the door.

There is a price, of course, for the "closet" mentality in terms of integrity and self esteem. When the image of perfection is closely guarded the reality becomes increasingly more painful to consider.

The first therapy session of my life occurred when I was fifteen. It was neither planned nor expected, which is, perhaps, why it happened. I was given an appointment with one of the school's guidance councilors. I was looking forward to it especially since I got to miss most of my biology class. The man was a priest and although I didn't know him very well, he seemed friendly and respectful. I don't recall exactly how it happened, but for the first time in my memory, I shared with someone from my heart. Perhaps he asked me what I planned to do with my life or how I liked my teachers that year. I ended up talking to him, in tears, about my fifth grade teacher, a

verbally abusive and damaging woman. It was the first time that there had been space enough from anyone for me to open up a door that had been long shut and I said that I wanted to be a teacher. I said I knew it could and should be different, that kids shouldn't have to be subjected to that kind of treatment. I surprised myself with what came from my heart. I had closed many doors in my life but had never experienced opening one up in such safety, with such grace.

It was an amazing experience for me to know that I had been given another person's total attention and had been heard without any attempt to talk me in or out of anything. I remember exactly how I felt when I left there. I had regained something very important and, ironically, I felt lighter. It takes a lot of energy to pretend to have thrown something away.

Lately, I have been able to see how willing I am to throw things away. It has been a way of life and I struggle to correct it; to be a steward rather than a consumer. Consumerism is not simply the act of using things. Consumerism is the act of throwing things away when they are no longer perfect, assuming that there will always be more. For me, it is an habitual response to my beliefs about how things ought to be. It is the death of freedom and creativity and sometimes even of people - as in Nazi Germany. And it is an addiction which is self-perpetuating and destructive. As long as I don't break down or lose my cool; as long as I look good on the outside, look prosperous, then everything will be OK. And as long as I

don't identify with anything or anyone substandard, nothing bad will happen to me. It began for me a long time ago. Control and suppression are fascist principles that begin at home in our cradles and schools. It takes a great deal of compassion to begin to turn this around and very often this compassion has to come from another human being - because that is where the perversion came from. We are taught to reject ourselves by people who were taught to reject themselves. Working in our homes is an obvious starting place. But it is not the only one.

Compassionate schooling is another place to work from. It is a place where people can begin to listen to their own voice within; the voice of the damaged one. For it is this voice which, as well as being angry and heartbroken, is the keeper of the key to redemption. We pawn parts of ourselves which speak some inconvenient or even unsafe truth, usually when we are young. What we need are schools in which it is safe to speak the truth, both for teachers and for students. We need schools in which there are children and adults both learning and sharing their wisdom, regardless of what the voice sounds like. And I am not talking here of schools for exceptional children. I was considered a normal child but I had "special" needs. Not "special" as in "out of the ordinary" but "special" as in "unrecognized and un-dealt with". The mind, the body and the emotions do not function separately. A compassionate school environment is one in which people are dealt with

from the recognition of this basic truth. To behave otherwise is to ignore the need.

The extent of the need is, perhaps, nowhere better illustrated than in the penchant of our young people for gorging their consciousnesses with atrocity and terror. But there is a big difference between the effect of mass-produced catharsis and personally spawned creative self-expression. It is the difference between writing one's own play and acting out someone else's. It is the difference between ordering clothes from a catalog and having something made to order. It's a matter of fit and timing. Those who are encouraged and inspired to write their own poetry or drama or music experience both the death and the rebirth that is involved. In exploring their own cellar, they may bring the melted dolly out along with the other treasures but they will also feel free to love her, fear her or whatever is real for them and, most importantly, they will recognize it all as their own as they are ready to. It will be exactly right, not hit and miss.

Recently, I took part in a wonderful workshop that involved learning dances and songs from many different countries as well as from our own. In most cases, the lyrics and the melodies involved not only totally unfamiliar words and content but also sounds and sound combinations which I had never heard before and time patterns which my body had never moved to before. In helping us to move and sing in new ways, one of the teachers talked about "learning doors". For some people, marking out the beats opened the "door"

for them. For others, standing behind the teacher was the "door". Sometimes, in order to sing and dance at the same time (in two new "languages") we had to get the dance down pat first. With others it worked only to memorize the words. There was no one key to our "doors". There was only providing the space in which to find them and then staying with it with humor and trust.

These are the survival skills that we all need. When children are able to be themselves it doesn't take ten months of school to learn long division. But what comes first? Unless poetry, drama, art and music are given at least equal status in curriculum, children who are able to open their "doors" most gracefully through these mediums will continue to suffer, and everyone will be poorer. Those who are able to perform academically despite their other needs often grow up to become people who are not able to function well otherwise. Young suicides are often very talented and gifted kids whose emotional needs went unrecognized because they didn't fail to perform.

It is easy to point out the people who are unsuccessful socially, morally economically or physically and who cause "big" problems for "society" because of their imbalances. These people are often considered expendable. But what about those who are successful÷ What about the problems caused by their imbalances÷ What about the fact that they operate a system that does consider some people expendable? That's a big problem for a lot of other people. It's a big problem when many of the ones with power

actually do believe in their own superiority. It's a big problem when, in school, the arts are considered expendable or at best, secondary. It's a big problem for those who don't fit the mold in whatever way.

People who know how to tap into the vast creative pool inside of themselves have the means for solving problems and for getting what they want in life without being destructive; without leaving parts of themselves behind, without rejecting others, without lying about who they are and without denying their effect on Mother Earth. To the extent to which I have had the courage to go down into my own cellar and bring up the parts of me that have been in shadow, I will be able to accept and be with the darkness or the reminders of darkness in others. Connections begin to be obvious in the light. Fear steps aside for trust. We become trustees and stewards of life on this planet.

Charlene Liberata has been a teacher at The Free School in Albany, New York, for four years. She is also a writer and a poet, a mother of four, an astrologer and a Reiki practitioner.

RESENTMENT

when he showed you his anger
you shot
from the hip
fast
he was shocked
he didn't know what to do for himself
he had no gun
he hadn't known
you had a gun
and
he hadn't known
he didn't
so he did the only thing
he very gently
took your gun away
soothed your fear
spoke carefully
all this
with your bullet in him

he didn't
and while he
gouges
and stings
and heals
you do the only thing you can
you ache
not where the bullet didn't go
but
where the gun was

then he left
to tend to
gouging out
stinging
leaving open
slowly
healing
his wound
when he sees you now
his wound aches
like joints
before the rain
not where the bullet went
but
where there was no gun
you hadn't known
you had a gun
and
you hadn't known

Charlene Liberata

WHAT THEY LEARN IN SCHOOL
by Jerome Stern

In the schools now, they want them to know all about marijuana, crack, heroin, and amphetamines,
Because then they won't be interested in marijuana, crack, heroin, and amphetamines,
But they don't want to tell them anything about sex because if the schools tell them about sex,
Then they'll be interested in sex,
But if the schools don't tell them anything about sex,
Then they will have high morals, and no one will get pregnant, and everything will be all right,
And they do want them to know a lot about computers so they will outcompete the Japanese,
But they don't want them to know anything about real science because then they will lose their faith and become secular humanists,
And they do want them to know all about this great land of ours so they will be patriotic,
But they don't want them to learn about the tragedy and pain in its real history because then they will be critical about this great

land of ours and we will be passively taken over by a foreign power,
And they want them to learn how to think for themselves so they can get good jobs and be successful,
But they don't want them to have books that confront them with real ideas because that will confuse their values,
And they'd like them to be good parents,
But they can't teach them about families because that takes them back to how you get to be a family,
And they want to teach them about how not to get AIDS
But that would mean telling them how not to get AIDS,
And they'd like them to know the Constitution,
But they don't like some of those amendments except when they are involved by the people they agree with,
And they'd like them to vote,
But they don't want them to discuss current events because it might be controversial and upset them and make them want to take drugs, which they already have told them all about,
And they want to teach them experience of morality,

But they also want them to learn that winning is not everything, it is the Only Thing,
And they want them to be well-read,
But they don't want them to read Chaucer or Shakespeare or Aristophanes or Mark Twain or Ernest Hemingway or John Steinbeck, because that will corrupt them,
And they don't want them to know anything about art because that will make them weird,
But they do want them to know about music so they can march in the band,
And they mainly want to teach them not to question, not to challenge, not to imagine, but to be obedient and behave well so that they will no longer recognize themselves, as the second millennium lurches to its panicky close.

This monologue aired March 17, 1989 on "All Things Considered," National Public Radio's daily news broadcast. Stern is a professor of English at Florida State University in Tallahassee.

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DARING TO BE OURSELVES:
Parameters of Risk-taking
by Jean Yaukey Matlack

There comes a time in many people's lives when the old order will no longer suffice. Sometimes this moment is precipitated by boredom; sometimes by a major loss, such as the death of a loved one or a way of life; sometimes by a crisis of dysfunction: the way we are living hurts so much we can't go on. The job and home situation may be in place, but somehow: "I am not having my life." There is a sense of emptiness and meaninglessness.

In this century, the literature of psychotherapy is peppered with titles that address the process of deep life change: *The Road Less Travelled, The Courage to Be, On Becoming a Person, The Search for the Real Self.* Religious writings have long traced this process. The metaphor of life as a journey and us as pilgrims signifies the inevitability of change and risk. It underscores the small measure of control we have over our lives. The pilgrim faces, as do we all, the dangers and vicissitudes of the open road.

It is part of youth to underestimate difficulty. Many of us who are middle-aged or older started out with a zealous belief that our dreams would be realized. And maybe they have been in part. But ...but ...with the passing of miles under our feet, if we dare to be honest, we begin to understand that the measure of our control is smaller than we once thought; that to exercise our wills, to exert our energy

with deep and concentrated precision within this small parameter of control, is the work of our lives.

To come to this place of humble acceptance of limit and equally profound assertion of self is usually a painful and fearful leg of the trip. Today thousands of people are involved in 12 step programs. The first of the 12 steps confesses loss of control and a determination to face and accept it.

Not everybody who comes to this point risks change. There are many ways to resist. One is to deny responsibility. If we focus on what we cannot control and insist that *that* must be different, we are doomed to remain helpless victims of our lives. Facing and accepting, indeed discerning, what cannot be changed involves grieving for the hopes, illusions, and dreams that are being given up. It is a process of surrender. The examination is both external (my husband/wife/partner will never..; my mother will always..) and internal.

The internal examination identifies those aspects of the way we present ourselves to others and imagine ourselves to ourselves that always were or have become false. It may be that we have done a kind of work well; our parents and friends approve; it earns a good salary; but it brings us no joy. It is false: we do not resonate to this way of living with the conviction, "This is who I really am." The roots of these false selves are mainly two. We may have adopted a way of being in the world to meet others' needs. "Dad wanted so for me to be a doctor that I did it." Or we

find a way of living that avoids pain. Fearing the adventure and uncertainty of trying our talents, we hang back in a secure backwater of underachievement. These adaptations often intertwine: we doubt that the people we serve would love us if we were our true selves!

Self-actualization, as described by Maslow in his seminal work, *Towards a Psychology of Being* (1971), takes energy, support, time, sometimes money, ... and always courage. If our lives stop working and we choose to change what we can, a process of withdrawing and stripping begins. We look at the facts of our lives and delete the ones that have lost their worth. Most people at this stage of change crave quiet: time alone. It may be a period of what looks like brooding. And it is, in the sense of a brooding hen.

Pregnancy often appears in peoples' dreams at this stage. Another apt metaphor is the cocoon. Inside it the larva dissolves into a gooey paste. From it emerges the imago. For people undergoing change, there can be a profound sense of not-knowing, leaving behind the familiar before a destination is clear. It is a time that requires faith. It can be a time of terror and excitement. And chaos. We rarely change in a straight line. We are ambivalent about the losses involved. Honesty is our only hope, but we slip and lie to ourselves. This can be a season of impulsive "solutions," when an affair attempts to solve marital malaise or an expensive vacation is thrown at the job a person has come to hate.

But if we can muster the faith, one day at a time, to pursue solitude and honesty, we may begin to hear ourselves and find we have a resource within, a compass unique to each of us, which will replace the *shoulds, oughts,* and self-denying attitudes of the past.

Solitude: time alone to listen to ourselves (to nature, music, dreams), time alone to sweat out our fears, to face the true nature of our discontent. Time to ask hard questions: What do I truly value? What do I love to do, to be near, to be part of? Where does my energy flow, where dissipate? What stops it? What is really important in my life? How do I see myself in relation to my fellows, to the world? If we dare to live these questions, we seek dialogue with people who are equal to the challenge these queries present. These others see us where we persist in being blind. They reject the inflations and deflations of our self-estimations. They may be able to point out the log we keep tripping on and help us move it off the path.

Solitude and dialogue with trusted others are, in my experience, the two essential ingredients for successful self-change. Alone we meditate, keep a journal, dance, do body work, engage in solitary outdoor and indoor activities of all sorts. With others we are in psychotherapy, 12 step programs, support groups, personal relationships of love and friendship. All these ways and many more access the inner I with honesty. The honesty is the hard part.

With what are we pregnant? One characteristic of those who dare to face these questions and live their way

into their own answers is an increased autonomy. A new sense of independence emerges as they look within for their guiding values. They are detached, self-governing.

Perhaps because they are freed from following other peoples' rules, they have a heightened energy, which expresses itself particularly in creativity.

Experiments allow the now-energized life to unfold in new forms. Our imagination serves up pictures of what might be. We call on our fragmentary answers to the hard questions we have lived. We try something new.

It is as experiment that I prefer to think of risk-taking. Trying to calculate the odds, assess possible negative outcomes (Could they be survived? Is any so dire that the experiment is foolhardy?), and take a detached stance every once in a while to see where we are. Life as experiment offers all the adventure one could want!

If the process of change is successful, we are like a spring cleared of the winter's dead leaves. Our energy flows. Experiments may lead to dramatic change. Or they may result in staying just exactly where we are and "following our bliss" here and now, to the delight and consternation of family and friends. The process always involves being controversial: we are not anymore much interested in social convention for its own sake; we are not as we were and as people expect us still to be. Despite the difficulties, if we dare change, we win the irreplaceable satisfaction of feeling at home in ourselves, pursuing the ecstasy of expressing our uniqueness in our loving and

working, in ways we deem meaningful, at this moment in history on the planet Earth.

***Jean Matlack** is a psychologist in private practice in Washington, D.C. Speaking in her own voice, she says, is one of the experiments she is currently undertaking.*

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JEAN PIAGET, B.F. SKINNER, and JOHN DEWEY: A STUDY OF TEACHING, LEARNING, and SCHOOLING, PART I

by Rosalie Angela Bianchi

INTRODUCTION:

In this paper, I discuss the work of three theorists whose work has been influential on contemporary U.S. education: an epistomologist, Jean Piaget; a behavioral scientist, B.F. Skinner; and a philosopher/pragmatist, John Dewey. They developed their work from three distinct perspectives and from spending their lifetimes deeply involved in their respective fields.

I came to study these writers while teaching at a unique institution in Albany, New York - the Free School. The Free School is a learning community in the center of a larger community of people who value emotional, intellectual, and spiritual growth. Our school has served children (ages two to fourteen) from families of all incomes in an inner city neighborhood since 1969. In the Free School, I have seen much learning and occasional miracles take place. Most of the adults at the school have been there for over ten years, and I have come to believe that miracles in learning require such long term commitments. Together we are learning how to be more nurturing, healing, and joyous; children thrive in this atmosphere.

From this hopeful context, I came to my theoretical studies, wanting to clarify and illuminate the learning process. I chose the three above mentioned men because

their ideas have had a specific and decisive influence upon education in America. Jean Piaget researched the subjective process of cognitive growth; B.F. Skinner focused upon observable behavior; and John Dewey reflected upon the relationship of learning and education to our lives, to what we do, and to our sense of being.

This work comes from my heart and from my mind while working with the children and adults at the Free School while studying about and experimenting with the ideas of Piaget, Skinner, and Dewey. I hope that reading my paper will expand your thoughts and feelings about teaching and learning as writing it has expanded mine.

CHAPTER ONE: PIAGET

Part 1. Piaget's Theories of Cognitive Development

Jean Piaget died on September 16, 1980, having lived most of his 84 years in Switzerland. He received worldwide recognition for his theory of cognitive development in human beings, and his ideas have become indispensable to U.S. education and child psychology. Some say that, Just as Freud influenced our ideas on emotional growth, so Piaget has influenced our ideas on intellectual growth.

Piaget called himself a genetic epistemologist, one who studies the development of knowledge. He wanted primarily to study the development of knowledge in the human race; thinking that there might be a relationship between this subject and the development of knowledge in children, he focused on the latter. Piaget's thought and methods were profoundly influenced by his background in biology; he looked for innate genetic patterns of cognitive growth, and studied the environment's effect on developing intelligence. His theories reflect his belief that the developing biological being becomes the thinking being.

Piaget's methods are not statistical (concerned with differences or similarities in large groups) but more qualitative and descriptive. He worked closely with individuals or small groups of children, presenting them with tasks, observing how they solved problems, and asking them open-ended questions such as how they came to their conclusions. This method, called critical exploration,

allowed him to follow the child's train of thought without imposing direction or judgment; it is not a standardized procedure, but an intuitive and individualized one. Piaget's questions allowed children to think more deeply about problems; from many years of such questions and observations, Piaget gathered information on how children think and develop intellectually.

Piaget experimented with children from ages one to sixteen, taking a particular problem and presenting it to various children of the same age group. In one experiment, an assistant, trained in critical exploration, had the following interaction with Taima, aged six:

> Do you know when your birthday is?
> I already had it, May 1st.
> Mine's in June; I told you a few minutes ago. Do you see these two balls? Do you know what they are made of?
> Modeling clay.
> Modeling clay, yes. And what color are they?
> Red.
> And the other one?
> White.
> It's white. Now look at the two balls of modeling clay and tell me if they are both the same size. Do they both have the same amount of clay in them?
> Yes.
> They're the same?
> Yes.
> Are you sure or are you not very sure?
> No.
> You're not very sure? Do you think one of them is bigger than the other? Is there more clay in one of them?
> (Taima hesitates, then makes up her mind.) No.
> So they're both the same? Now do you know what we are going to do? We are going to say it's cake -not really,

but just pretend. You take the red cake, and I'll take the white. If we eat them, we'll both eat the same amount?
Yes.
Yes, okay, now watch. I'm going to take my cake and do something with it. Tell me what I'm doing. Look. What is it?
It's a stick.
A stick. Now what do you think? If I eat this stick, and you eat your clay ball, will we both eat the same amount or does one of us eat more than the other?
You have more to eat than I do.
Yes? Why?
Because that's longer than this.
Okay. And suppose I make it longer - you see, even longer than this - you see, like this?
You'll still have more.
I still have more to eat than you do?
Yes.
If I take it again and make it into a ball, like I had it a minute ago - like it was at the beginning - how much will we have to eat?
The same.
The same?
Yes.
All right. Now we'll take your ball. Look, I'm going to flatten it out like this. What shall we call this, what I just made?
A steak.
A steak? Well okay. It's a funny color for a steak, not cooked yet right?
Yes.
Now you eat your steak and I'll eat my ball. Do we both have the same amount to eat? Or does one of us have more?
Yes. (Taima smiles and points to herself.)
You have more? Why?
Because mine's fatter than yours.
Fatter. But yours is so thin. Look.
It's bigger.
Bigger? So you really have more, do you?
Is that right? Are you right? Are you sure?
Yes.

But when yours was a ball too - when it was a ball like this one - how much did we have, each of us?
The same.
The same? So now it's changed? And to make them the same again, what do we have to do? Have to make it into a ball again?
Yes.
Your clay?
Yes. (1)

For children at a certain time in development, there appears to be more clay because it is either longer or fatter or thinner, but never all at once. Piaget noted that when some children perceive one dimension, they don't appear to see the other; somewhat older children, however, would perceive changes in length and width simultaneously and see the compensation, understanding that matter was conserved because nothing was taken away. Piaget did this experiment with other children from about four to six years old, and found their reasoning to be the same as that of six-year-old Taima. Right before their eyes, they saw that nothing was taken away or added and knew this (2); but this was no reason to believe that the two amounts were equal when they appeared to be so different. Piaget calls this reasoning prelogical - not poorly formed adult logic but logic which is the child's own, from another world; this was the world which Piaget explored.

As more of these experiments were done with children of different ages in many different areas: time, causality, space, morality, number, and chance, Piaget and his collaborators began to notice that children in specific age groups would give evidence of a similar type of reasoning.

As such patterns emerged in his experiments, Piaget theorized that there might be evidence of different levels of development. Such developmental levels were not particularly associated with a specific age group, but - more importantly - were evidence that there might be broad stages of development all human beings go through in their intellectual growth.

The sequence of stages is more important than the age at which a child reaches a stage. "We call it a sequential series of stages, each of which is a necessary part of the whole, a necessary result of all that precedes it."(3) This is not a cumulative process; the mental structures acquired at a previous level are reconstructed (brought to mind) before they can be integrated into new structures. This, according to Piaget, is part of the process of intellectual development. The important point about stages is not that children reach levels of knowledge at particular ages, but - as Piaget said - that there are broad periods of development evolving in a continuous sequence. Each stage arises out of the one preceding it by a reorganization of what has gone before.

Through his experiments, Piaget saw that there might be four major periods of development. First is the sensori-motor period from birth to eighteen months, a stage which is characterized by intelligence resulting from the child's experiences - grasping, feeling, looking, shaking, and exploring - with the physical world. Piaget gathered this information by observing his own three children and writing detailed accounts of their behavior. Here is a brief excerpt

exemplifying the explorations children engage in with new objects - swinging, shaking, and rubbing them against the sides of cribs, etc.:

> (At three months, 29 days) Laurent sees for the first time a paper knife. He grasps and looks at it, but only for a moment. Afterward, he immediately swings it with his right hand, as he does all objects grasped. He then rubs it by chance against the wicker of the bassinet and tries to produce the sound heard as though the knife were the rattle he has used for this purpose. It then suffices that I place the object in his left hand for him to shake in the same fashion...(4)

Through this kind of activity, new objects are incorporated into existing mental structures - ideas about the nature of the physical world.

The next stage occurs roughly between the ages of two and five years, as children begin to deal with the world on a symbolic level, including mental images, drawings, dreams, make-believe, gestures, and language. When mother leaves the room, the child now has a mental picture of her and doesn't get as upset; he or she imitates and begins to adjust to the world of adults. Piaget calls the thinking of this stage "prelogical," as in Taima's thinking in the experiment with the balls of clay. This type of literal, of-the-moment, and egocentric thinking comes from the child's direct experience with the world: "What you see is what you get."

It is a unique way of thinking, and - I believe - somehow deeply necessary to a child's development. Piaget

calls this the pre-operational stage because the child is capable of symbolic thought but unable to manipulate symbols (as in mathematics) and perform operations such as addition and subtraction. He/she cannot grasp reversibility - the relationship between adding and subtracting, nor can he/she imagine an object from the perspective of another person.

Piaget and his collaborator, Barbel Inhelder, devised a test called "the three mountain problem." (5) They set three mountains on a table and one chair at each side of the table. The child sat in one of the chairs, and a doll was moved from one to the other of the three remaining chairs; the child was then asked what the doll could see from each of its three stations. He might respond by drawing a doll's-eye view from each position, by selecting from drawings already made, or by constructing the doll's view with cardboard cut-outs. The pre-operational child could not do this; only children in the later part of the next stage, the concrete operational stage, could identify the doll's view with confidence and accuracy.

I think that it is somehow necessary for children to be egocentric at this time in their lives. People often describe this stage in negatives, or in terms of a lack of ability. I think it has something to do with the building of confidence in one's own perceptions.

The third major period starts at about seven or eight years of age, and is characterized by the ability to classify concrete objects, order them, and establish correspondence

between them. The child can conserve quantity and number, and can understand parts/whole relationships. Piaget did the following experiment, using three cardboard boxes and 20 wooden beads (18 brown and 2 white ones); all of the beads were spread out, clearly visible, on the bottom of one of the boxes.

Bes (6; 2): Are all these beads made of wood, or not?
They're all made of wood.
Are there more wooden ones or more brown ones?
More brown ones.
If I put the brown beads in that box, will there be any beads left in this one?
Yes, the white ones.
And if I put the wooden beads in that other empty box, will there be any left?
No.
Well then, if we made a necklace with all the wooden beads that would be in that box, and if we made another necklace with the brown beads that would be in the other box, which would be longer?
The brown one (6).

This is an example of pre-operational thought. A child in the concrete operational stage will answer strongly that the wooden bead necklace would be longer because, "there are more wooden beads than brown ones"; he/she understands this relationship. Whereas the pre-operational child will not see the inconsistencies in a situation and is not troubled by "obvious" not see the inconsistencies in a situation and is not troubled by "obvious" (to us) contradictions, the concrete operational child does see and is troubled by them. Each time he/she experiences difficulty and works out the problem, the child grows intellectually.

At age eleven or twelve, the fourth major period - the formal operations period - begins. Operations are no longerapplied only to material objects, but to hypotheses and propositions as well; there is a kind of transcendence of the immediate - a systematic trying out of possibilities.

John Philips, in his book, *The Origins of Intellect, Piaget's Theory* (7) spoke of the relationship between the last three stages, saying that the pre-operational child is capable of preposterous flights of fancy. I would call it a kind of magical thinking based on not having all the information adults have in perceiving a problem and being totally wrapped up in the moment and within themselves. The concrete operational child's thinking comes from his/her concern for organizing the actual data of his/her senses. The adolescent in the formal operations period is capable of getting into his/her imagination and can think of possibilities; he/she can also keep in mind his/her knowledge about operations, conservation numbers, reversibility, cause and effect, classes, etc.

By "formal" operations period, Piaget also means that the child can follow the form of an argument and disregard its specific content. Take the syllogism: "All children like spinach; boys are children; therefore, boys like spinach." A child not in the formal operations period will respond to the content (especially if he/she has strong feelings about spinach), but the adolescent can follow the argument and respond to the form.(8)

According to Piaget, these stages are more than an outgrowth due to maturation of the nervous system; they are evidence of the progressive development of intelligence

which is dependent on maturation, on physical and empirical experience, on social interaction, and on a process Piaget calls "equilibration." Movement from one stage to the next, therefore, is an interactive, constructive process.

Piaget was asked the question: "Can one accelerate the stages indefinitely?" He called this a ridiculous question, noting that American educators often ask it. He doubted whether there was any advantage to such acceleration: "...the human baby develops more slowly than other animals, but goes much further in development. There must be a reason for this. It may be that there is an optimal speed of development for each species." Another time he said, "development of knowledge is spontaneous and, like a biological clock, it cannot be advanced." (9).

Maturation is a factor in cognitive development, providing the child with more opportunities for responding to the environment as he learns to grasp, crawl, and walk. Maturation involves what is inherited and what is determined biologically; certain experiences cannot be assimilated into the child's thought structures unless the child has matured enough to do a certain task, e.g., coordinating vision with hand movement in order to grasp.

The second factor mentioned as necessary for cognitive development is physical/empirical experience which comes from interacting with the world. Piaget believes that thoughts and images are formed from motor actions; the child then constructs knowledge of the physical world. A child constructs logical relationships between

objects he/she knows; he/she can perform operations on these objects (10). These relationships include comparisons such as higher, lower, faster, or bigger; they exist not in the objects but in the mind of the child who compares them.

The third factor, social interaction, is the information learned from other people and books, etc. Interaction with others helps the child open up to different ways of looking at things. For Piaget, language does not form intelligence, but develops first, out of interaction on social and physical planes; the ability to speak comes out of structures the child has formed from birth. Piaget disagrees with Chomsky, who says that language develops out of an inner fixed core which is within the child before he/she has had any experience with the world. Chomsky has also said that intelligence develops out of our ability to use language. Not so, says Piaget; our intelligence develops through an internal process of construction and interaction with the environment (11).

The fourth factor necessary for cognitive development concerns this internal process of construction; it is the coordinating integrating function, equilibration. Within each of us is a system integrating incoming data with existing structures and ideas; assimilation is our ability to take in new information as we incorporate sensation, experience, and ideas into our own activity. Assimilation is constantly balanced by accommodation which occurs when the input changes the structure within the mind. The entire scheme of assimilation must alter as it accommodates to the elements it

assimilates. That is, it modifies itself in relation to the particularities of events but does not lose its continuity (12).

A baby receiving his/her first toy tries to put it in his/her mouth, accommodating to it by adjusting his/her mouth to its size. He/she learns that it can't be swallowed and modifies his/her understanding of objects to include edible and non-edible; he/she has assimilated the information and accommodated it to his/her inner scheme (scheme, meaning a continually changing framework in which incoming sensory data can fit and new information can be assimilated). The baby is organizing new experiences in various ways, adapting to the environment and developing intellectually. This baby is also seeking ways to achieve a balance between incoming data and inner schemes and between what he/she understands and what he/she experiences in the environment - in other words, a balance between assimilation and accommodation. Piaget calls this balance which the child naturally seeks equilibrium. Cognitive equilibriums differ from mechanical ones, which conserve themselves without change and are not states of rest as in thermodynamic equilibriums. A cognitive equilibrium is closer to a stationary but dynamic state with exchanges capable of building and maintaining structural order in an open system...(13). An organism achieves equilibrium through the regulating process of equilibration.

Equilibration enables the organism to go from certain states of equilibrium to others which are qualitatively different, passing through many non-balances and re-

equilibrations. The organism can return to a former equilibrium; in that case, however, there is no cognitive growth. There are three forms of equilibration (14).

1. When there is an interaction between the subject and objects, equilibration occurs between the assimilation of schemes of action and accommodation of these schemes to the objects. There is a mutual conservation; if not, the activity is abandoned.

2. When subsystems interact, there can be equilibration. There is a reciprocal assimilation and a reciprocal accommodation. Piaget performed an experiment where a child was presented with a problem; in order to solve it, he would have had to have integrated two systems. The child was given dolls and sticks of ordered heights, and was asked to match up the sticks with the corresponding dolls. The dolls were larger than the sticks, so the child had to be able to note the order of sizes to match them up.

3. The third form of equilibration occurs between subsystems and the totality which includes them. Piaget used the example of a person walking around a moving train; the person is the subsystem, and the train is the totality. The person assimilates the movement of the train and accommodates to it by a particular motion. The entire train assimilates and accommodates the moving person; it becomes not Just a moving train but a moving train with a moving person on it. There is a mutual conservation.

Piaget noted that in the above three examples, only positive characteristics are dealt with; when equilibrium

happens, there is a relationship between positive and negative characteristics. The subject or person must be able to perceive what is so and what is not; he must be able to discriminate, only a clear and exact relationship between affirmations and negations ensures equilibrium (15).

What causes an organism to seek equilibrium through equilibration? A person perceives a contradiction, or experiences something which does not fit in with his ideas or structures about the world; he goes into disequilibrium and seeks to re-equilibrate. Piaget has said that non-balance might be the driving force behind development; without it, knowledge remains static. But the driving force of the non-balance is also measured by the possibility of overcoming it and reaching a higher level of equilibrium; progressive equilibrations are central to cognitive development. Piaget's theory, therefore, sees knowledge as stemming not from maturation and experience alone but from equilibration; knowledge is a new construction arising from the interaction between the child and the environment.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Briunguier, Jean Claude, *Conversations with Jean Piaget,* Trans. Basia Gulati, Chicago,University of Chicago Press, 1980, p. 28.
2.Ibid., p. 28-9.
3. Piaget, J.,*Biology and Knowledge*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1971, p. 16.
4. Piaget, J., *The Origins of Intelligence in Children,* Trans. M. Cook, New York, International Universities Press, 1952, p. 197.

5. Piaget, J. & B.Inhelder, *The Child's Conception of Space,* trans.F.J. Langdon & J.L. Lunzer, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1956, pp. 210-11.
6. Piaget, J. & Alina Szeminska, *The Child's Conception of Number,* Trans. C. Gattegno & F.M. Hodgson, New York, Humanities Press, Inc., 1952, p. 165.
7. Philips, John, *The Origins of Intellect: Piaget's Theory:,* San Francisco, W.H. Freeman and Company, p. 101.
8. Ibid., p. 103.
9. Gallagher, Jeanette M. and D. Kim Reid, *The Learning Theory of Piaget and Inhelder,* Monterey, California, Brooks/Cole Publishing Co., p. 205.
10. Ibid., pp. 41-2.
11. Ibid., p. 38.
12. Piaget, J., *The Development of Thought, Equilibration of Cognitive Structures*, New York,Viking Press, 1977, p. 9.
13. Ibid., p. 4.
14. Ibid., pp. 8-9.
15. Ibid., pp. 16-17.

Part 2. Piaget's Theory of Learning

Piaget described two types of learning. The first involves learning in the strict sense (1) in which knowledge is gained through direct environmental experience with people, objects, and culture; the capacity for this type is subordinated to development. In order for the child to learn, he/ she must have the capacity to assimilate a new experience or information. For example, a small baby will not learn from a ball being rolled towards him/her because he/she hasn't yet developed eye-hand coordination; learning in the strict sense, then, is acquiring information and skills.

Learning also occurs in the broader sense, according to Piaget (2). This results from the interplay of maturation, experience, and the self-regulating process - equilibration. In

the course of this broader process of learning, a child tries to apply a scheme or a strategy to a situation, e.g., a set of ideas on how an object responds when thrown. If his/her scheme (all round things bounce) is inappropriate or inadequate, several things could occur. The child might be unable to see a conflict and not wonder why it didn't bounce, or - noticing the conflict - he/she might seek an explanation to solve the problem.

Similarly, if a child is shown a reflection of the letters "A" and "R" in a mirror, he/she might not wonder why some things are reflected a certain way and others are not; he/she might not notice that the "R" is reversed and the "A" isn't (thus avoiding a conflict), or he/she might dismiss it as being caused by a magic mirror. Another possibility, again, is to seek an explanation; Piaget describes the means for this search as the process of achieving compensation between affirmations and negations, between what is there and what is not.

Affirmations are empirical facts, while negations are constructed by abstracting some kind of relationship; they are not present in experience. The affirmations are the reversal of "R" and the fact that "A" remains the same; the negations are that, in that relationship, "R" is reversed and "A" isn't. Negations are constructed through reflexive abstraction (3), which is an inner process of taking an idea from a lower level (motor or visual) to a higher level (thought), comparing and looking for relationships, and

drawing inferences which allow the child to reorganize his/her knowledge.

The child will realize, through this process of reflexive abstraction, that the mirror is not magical but that the source of contradiction lies in the relationships of the letters and the mirror. The child then constructs a rule about this; it is during construction of this rule that learning takes place. When this new rule is constructed, the child can anticipate when an event will occur (what will happen when "A" and "R" are reflected and when "B" and "O" are reflected); consequently, he/she won't experience any conflict when it does. Learning this rule is evidence that the child has reached a new equilibrium, which opens up possibilities for him/her to experience new conflicts in further experiments with a mirror and symmetry. This is learning in the broad sense. From the experiments of Piaget and one of his collaborators, Barbel Inhelder, Gallagher and Reid have found principles of learning which they feel are clearly illustrated in Piaget's work (4):

1. Learning is an internal process of construction. Children infer knowledge from their own activity; nothing is imposed from without. Piaget gives an example of a boy at the beach, arranging pebbles in a row and counting ten, then arranging them in a circle and noting that there are still ten. The boy, says Piaget, has discovered that sum is independent of order. Nothing external imposed itself on this boy; he counted the pebbles through empirical abstraction, which happens when we abstract properties from objects. The boy abstracted a rule from his activities, and - because he reflected on what he did - he learned through an inner process which Piaget calls reflexive abstraction.

2. Learning is a higher level reorganization. Children learn by observing objects and reorganizing what they learn from their activities on a higher mental level through equilibration, which in turn leads to higher equilibriums. Equilibration is a self-correcting process which results in reorganization and learning; in the instance above, something was learned about mirrors and reversibility.

3. Learning is subordinated to development and cannot occur unless there is the physical ability to perform certain acts. Children must also have the capacity to respond to a new experience or concept, and this depends on what the child has learned so far and what structures he has acquired. Thus, learning is subordinated to physical as well as cognitive development.

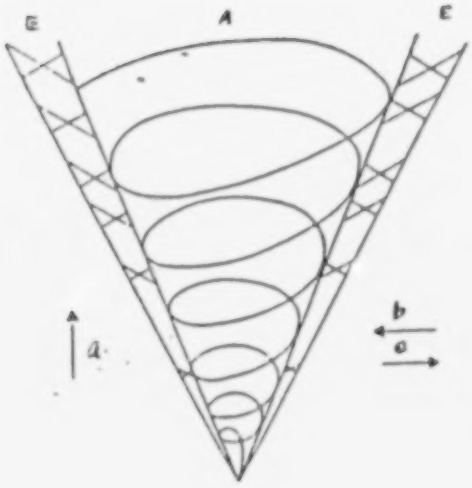
4. Growth in knowledge is often sparked by feedback which results from questioning, contradictions, and consequent reorganization. Here, feedback means an internal process of adjusting information with expectations until the child can correctly anticipate what will happen. Self-correction happens when a child has the ability to observe contradictions between expectations and the results of his/her actions.

5. The previous questions, contradictions, and reorganization are often sparked by social interaction. Piaget believed that children benefit from social interaction with peers and those older than they. Sometimes, children playing alone won't come to the same realizations as children playing with others.

6. Since awareness (or conscious realization) is a process of construction rather than sudden insight, understanding lags behind action. Piaget has demonstrated that children are able to perform tasks successfully without understanding why. According to Piaget, knowledge results from discovery and invention; it is not something which is acquired immediately, but is - rather - constructed.

Piaget describes the way in which knowledge is constructed as a diagram in the form of a spiral (5). The spiral itself is the development of knowledge; the borders on either side represent interaction with the environment, and

"E" represents empirical abstraction. Through our senses, we take in experiences from our interaction and activity with the environment. The X's are called "reflexive frames" and are recording instruments; information is taken in. The spiral "A" is the process of reflexive abstraction; vector "a" represents successive levels of cognitive development. Vector "b" represents changes due to the environment, and vector "c" represents explorations - which may be trial and error - leading to reorganizations in response to the environment. The spiral is opening and widening.



Concerning growth of knowledge, Piaget says, "Any knowledge raises new problems as it resolves preceding ones." (6) The stages grow out of each other in a continuous process; there are no tasks neatly separating one stage from another. What a child learns is dependent upon what he/she has learned before, and each new structure he/she incorporates opens up new possibilities as the spiral widens.

Piaget sees the development of knowledge in children as a continually growing cognitive structure. This cannot fit into a theory which reduces intellectual development into bits of learning. I will look at such a reductionist theory in the next part of my paper. First, however, in what way do I see this theory relating to education and to my experience at the Free School?

FOOTNOTES:

1. Gallagher and Reid, *Learning Theory of Piaget and Inhelder*, p. 39.
2. Ibid., p. 39.
3. Ibid., p. 30.
4. Ibid., pp. 4-7.
5. Gallagher and Reid, p. 36.
6. Piaget, Jean, *The Development of Thought, the Equilibration of Cognitive Structures*, New York: Viking Penguin, 1977, p. 30.

Part 3. How Has Piaget's Theory Been Applied to Education?

Educators have tried to pull techniques or a method of teaching from Piaget's work, especially from his concept

of developmental stages. Following Piaget's method of questioning children and his experiments, educators have suggested that one should teach the experiment and help the children understand the concept more thoroughly and consistently than they could on their own (1).

One of Piaget's experiments involved conservation of substance (the experiment with the balls of clay was one of these). An example of this would be measuring two equal cups of juice into a tall, thin glass and a shallow bowl, respectively, and asking a child which holds more. Most younger children would say that the glass holds more because the level of juice is higher; some children will choose the bowl because it is wider. These children have not yet grasped the notion of conservation. For some children there will be a period of confusion and disequilibrium, and - if the concept of conservation is constructed - they will realize that both receptacles hold the same amount of juice.

Educators, particularly in America and, most notably, Jerome Bruner, believe that conservation can be taught at any age if presented in the proper form. Bruner thought that by giving children more experience with liquids and different size containers, they would be able to develop the concept of conservation at an earlier age. Because of these types of experiments, educators thought that they could speed up a child's rate of development. It seems, however that Piaget was not the least bit interested in this, wondering what good would come of it. He did say, however, that a child with a good mental inheritance and an environment

which encourages creative experimentation may develop some logical structures at an earlier age. Elkind points out: Piaget evolves both a nature and nurture theory. It depends on both environment and biology (nature of the being).

My understanding here is that Piaget sees that enriched experience on the sensori-motor level is important in development, as are varied experiences in social interaction. He does not, however, advocate accelerated learning techniques performed by adults with "pedagogical mania."

I also think that Piaget's work presents a model of how development occurs, rather than suggesting techniques or methods to use in the classroom. A study of his theory, however, helps one to consider the inner development of intelligence in children, knowing that this development proceeds at its own pace.

In *Science Education* (2), Piaget writes that in school, the emphasis should be on activity and spontaneous work based on personal need and interest. He advocates suitable equipment which would provide a catalyst for the transformation of external active manipulative experiences into internal intellectual realities - things which would help form abstractions.

According to Piaget, a student is motivated by an internal source, and his intellectual development is aided and abetted by environmental intrusions; this is an interactionist's point of view. Piaget does not assume innate knowledge - his theory is constructivist; knowledge is built from the

child's activity. Piaget's kind of school would be filled with social interaction, and physical and mental activity; conflict, contradictions, and questions arise naturally out of these processes. The situation is ripe for disequilibrium, and - possibly - equilibration to a higher level to occur. Actually, the situation I have described is a lot like everyday living; evidently, schools haven't modeled themselves after this.

Piaget makes many strong statements about education in *Science Education and the Psychology of the Child.* The fundamental problem, he says, is that educators are more interested in teaching than they are in children. They concentrate on the methods and curriculum on which their training has focused them, while their knowledge of child psychology is often sketchy and their interest in the child's emotional and mental development limited. Teachers want to have children listen, but Piaget says that this is not how children learn. Knowledge is derived from action.

Piaget says that if the aim of education is to form the intelligence rather than to stock the memory, then education is in grave deficiency. Student teachers are not trained to observe and question children; if they were, they would learn so much more about how children's minds develop. He said that teachers need to carry out their own research, "to see how difficult it is to make themselves understood by the children, and to understand what the children are saying." (3) Piaget describes a year-long primary school training program which requires that all student teachers take part in a research program.(4) This is an intellectual training,

he says, which forces students to understand the complexity of the problems involved in teaching children far better than from a professor's lecture.

One more word about Piaget's view of schooling and children. Piaget states that while his emphasis is on children pursuing their own interests, this does not mean that the best method of education is to let children do exactly as they like. He notes, however, that if a child is interested in what he/she does, he/she is capable of making efforts to the limit of his/her physical endurance. . .only then will true discipline come into being true discipline to which the children themselves consent. In this way, says Piaget, the children who come out of our schools will be capable of creativity and production, and not simply repetition. (5)

FOOTNOTES:

1. Bruner, Jerome, *Toward a Theory of Instruction* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, p. 214.
2. Piaget, Jean, *Science Education and the Psychology of the Child*, New York: Orion Press, 1970, pp. 51-54.
3. Piaget, Jean, *Relations Between the Notions of Space, Time, and Speed in Children.*, Ripple and Rockcastle, eds., *Piaget Rediscovered,* p. 40.
4. Piaget, Jean, *To Understand is to Invent: The Future of Education* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1973, pp. 129-30.
5. Ibid., p. 20.

Part 4. Piaget's Theory Reflected at the Free School

At the Free School, I see Piaget's ideas that social interaction, physical experience, conflict, and interest in one's own activity promote intellectual development. We believe in social interaction, and it happens continually - between everybody in the school, and - most importantly - between children of different ages. Our classes are mixed; in the math room, math is being done on first to sixth grade levels. The same is true in the writing, and - to some extent - the reading and social studies rooms. During free times, you'll find children of different ages reading to each other, teaching each other how to use the computer, playing games, and doing projects together. Once a month, all the elementary school kids plus the adults go to a farm in the Berkshires to live, work, and play together.

We have a self-governance system, where any child in the elementary part of the school (ages five to fourteen) can call a council meeting if he/she has a problem; everyone in this part of the school must attend. A child is elected chairperson and runs the meeting following Roberts' Rules of Order. The children and adults support the child in solving his/her problem, but most of the responsibility for the solution rests on him/her. Each incident is so unique that it is difficult to discuss how it is handled, but I will say that much weight is given to the child's willingess to solve the problem; if it is important to him/her, it is usually solved.

In these council meetings, I see children experiencing conflict within themselves in order to

understand another's point of view. When a child expects a situation to go one way and it goes another, perhaps that is an opportunity for the child to experience an unbalance or disequilibrium (as Piaget calls it), and possibly re-equilibrate to a higher cognitive level. But, as Piaget says, cognitive development is an inner process, and growth depends on what is happening with the child. At the Free School, we provide opportunities for growth; the rest is up to the child.

There is much activity at the Free School, and children show a genuine interest in what they are doing, from learning skills to playing soccer. Whatever they do, especially in the learning of math, reading, and writing, you have a sense when you enter the classroom that they are intensely involved in their own activities. They are not trying to please a teacher or earn good grades (indeed, we don't give grades); there is a sense that learning is their process, and that they derive much satisfaction from being able to say, "I can do it."

Children often come to the Free School from public school with a sense that learning skills is something adults want them to do; such children have formed habits of pleasing adults or reacting against them. I have a feeling that the latter type is often called learning-disabled, a behavior problem, or hyperactive. Children who have been at the Free School since they were three or four years old are usually "raring to go" with learning, and view it as the exciting process which it is. What is the difference?

At the Free School, we are more interested in children than in teaching; we do not practice techniques or one particular method. We care mostly about being with the children, nurturing them, setting limits for them, giving them choices, and helping them to get through whatever is blocking them from experiencing their own competence. We are acutely aware of the interconnectedness of emotional and intellectual development. I have seen children express feelings which they have been holding back for a long time - e.g., grief or anger - and afterwards, skyrocket intellectually.

At the Free School, we listen to children and we ask them to listen to us, not as bosses but as fellow human beings who have been in the world longer than they and who have something to teach them. Children know when adults are speaking truthfully and can sense emotional honesty; I believe that an adult-child relationship happens when there is truth between them. With truth, teaching and learning can happen in the exciting and marvelous way in which they should; adults and children are vitally interested in what they are doing and phrases like "attention span" have no meaning.

It is my belief that when emotional honesty is not there, children will spend most of their time trying to figure out what the adults' real feelings are in order to establish a safe place for themselves. Not knowing where the adult is emotionally can cause children - especially the sensitive ones - to feel and act out anxiety. The adult, out of touch with his feelings, will often respond with anger (perhaps this was the

Children direct much of their own learning, given free choice.

Important social learning takes place on the playground.

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feeling which the child detected in the first place). The child relieves his anxiety by getting the adult to experience his repressed feelings.

If we want children to be creative and productive, we must let them experience a safe place in school, where they n learn to trust adults, and clearly know the rules and the ılts of their choices. This is especially true for children o have been deprived of trust and love; these are the most nsitive ones who are often labeled hyperactive, notionally disturbed, or learning-disabled. These children ıre often subjected to "techniques and methods," when what hey need are adults who are straightrorward, honest, and loving with them. Then, they can immerse themselves in their own activities and get on with their intellectual development.

This brings me to a criticism of Piaget. When he discusses learning and education, he doesn't mention the student-teacher relationship, and the emotional growth which must occur before there can even be a relationship. Children usually will not immerse themselves in growing and learning ctivities unless they feel safe to do so; they will not take ntellectual risks or let themselves experience the imbalance necessary for intellectual growth. They will not let teachers be with them in this process unless there is trust. Although there are children who will learn intellectually no matter what their relationship with the teacher, I think that they lose out because - on some level - they are blocking, perhaps, emotional awareness. I believe that in order for children to

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become creative, productive adults, we must allow them to grow emotionally and intellectually.

Since Piaget's theory of cognitive development describes an inner process, it presents difficulty for anyone wanting to measure objectively. The criteria are subjective; Piaget is dealing with an unconscious process. Perhaps Piaget was so focused on his extensive work that it did not seem important to him to consider the relationship between a child's intellectual development and his emotional connectedness with the environment.

In the next part of my paper, I will consider a man who deals neither with emotional development or inner mental processes - B.F. Skinner. In his study, Skinner investigates behavior only; he has something very different to say about teaching and learning [To be continued].

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, Norwich University, Vermont College, 1984.

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MAYBE YOU REMEMBER it being said that man is like a rig consisting of passenger, driver, horse and carriage. Except there can be no question of the passenger, for he is not there, so we can only speak of the driver. Our mind is the driver...

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Inside us we have a horse; it obeys orders from outside. And our mind is too weak to do anything inside. Even if the mind gives the order to stop, nothing will stop inside. We educate nothing but our mind. We know how to behave with such and such. "Goodbye." "How do you do?" But it is only the driver who knows this. Sitting on his box he has read about it. But the horse has no education whatever. It has not even been taught the alphabet, it knows no languages, it never went to school. The horse was also capable of being taught, but we forgot all about it.... And so it grew up a neglected orphan. It only knows two words: right and left.

What I said about inner change refers only to the need of change in the horse. If the horse changes, we can change even externally. If the horse does not change, everything will remain the same, no matter how long we study.

It is easy to decide to change sitting quietly in your room. But as soon as you meet someone, the horse kicks. Inside us we have a horse.

The horse must change.

If anyone thinks that self-study will help and he will be able to change, he is greatly mistaken. Even if he reads all the books, studies for a hundred years, masters all knowledge, all mysteries - nothing will come of it. Because all this knowledge will belong to the driver. And he, even if he knows, cannot drag the cart without the horse - it is too heavy.

First of all you must realize that you are not you. Be sure of that, believe me You are the horse, and if you wish to start working, the horse must be taught a language in which you can talk to it, tell it what you know and prove to it the necessity of, say, changing its disposition. If you succeed in this, then, with your help, the horse too will begin to learn.

But change is possible only inside.

AS TO THE CART, its existence was completely forgotten. Yet it is also a part, and an important part, of the team. It has its own life, which is the basis of our life. It has its own psychology. It also thinks, is hungry, has desires, takes part in the common work. It too should have been educated, sent to school, but neither the parents nor anyone else cared. Only the driver was taught . He knows languages, know where such and such a street is. But he cannot drive there alone.

Originally our cart was built for an ordinary town; all the mechanical parts were designed to suit the road. The cart has many small wheels. The idea was that the unevennesses of the road would distribute the lubricating oil evenly and thus oil them. But all this was calculated for a certain town where the roads are not too smooth. Now the town has changed, but the make of the cart has remained the same. It was made to cart luggage, but now it carries passengers. And it always drives along one and the same street, the "Broadway." Some parts got rusty from long disuse. If, at times, it needs to drive along a different street,

it seldom escapes a breakdown and a more or less serious overhaul afterwards. Badly or well, it can still work on the "Broadway," but for another street it must first be altered....

Question: Why was the horse not educated?

Answer: The grandfather and grandmother gradually forgot, and all the relatives forgot. Education needs time, needs suffering; life becomes less peaceful. At first they did not educate it through laziness, and later they forgot altogether.

Here again, the law of three works. Between the positive and the negative principles there must be friction, suffering. Suffering leads to the third principle. It is a hundred times easier to be passive so that suffering and result happen outside and not inside you. Inner result is achieved when everything takes place inside you.

Sometimes we are active, at other times we are passive. For one hour we are active, for another hour passive.

When we are active we are being spent, when we are passive we rest. But when everything is inside you, you cannot rest, the law acts always. Even if you do not suffer, you are not quiet.

Every man dislikes suffering, every man wants to be quiet. Every man chooses what is easiest, least disturbing, tries not to think too much. Little by little our grandfather and grandmother rested more and more. The first day, five minutes of rest; the next day, ten minutes; and so on. A moment came when half of the time was spent on rest. And

the law is such that if one thing increases by a unit, another thing decreases by a unit. Where there is more it is added, where there is less it is reduced. Gradually your grandfather and grandmother forgot about educating the horse. And now no one remembers any more.

Question: How to begin inner change?

Answer:...You should begin to teach the horse a new language, prepare it for the desire to change.

THE CART and the horse are connected. The horse and the driver are also connected by the reins. The horse knows two words - right and left. At times the driver cannot give orders to the horse because our reins have the capacity now to thicken, now to become more thin. They are not made of leather. When our reins become more thin, the driver cannot control the horse. The horse knows only the language of the reins. No matter how much the driver shouts, "Please, right," the horse does not budge. If he pulls, it understands. Perhaps the horse knows some language, but not the one the driver knows....

We must understand the difference between a casual passenger and the master of the cart. "I" is the master, if we have an "I." If we have not, there is always someone sitting in the cart and giving orders to the driver. Between the passenger and the driver there is a substance which allows the driver to hear. Whether these substances are there or not depends on many accidental things. It may be absent. If the substance has accumulated, the passenger can give orders to the driver, but the driver cannot order the horse, and so on.

At times you can, at others you cannot, it depends on the amount of substance there is. Tomorrow you can, today you cannot. This substance is the result of many things.

One of these substances is formed when we suffer. We suffer whenever we are not mechanically quiet. There are different kinds of suffering. For instance, I want to tell you something, but I feel it is best to say nothing. One side wants to tell, the other wants to keep silent. The struggle produces a substance....

Question: Conflict of two desires leads to suffering. Yet some suffering leads to a madhouse.

Answer: Suffering can be of different kinds. To begin with, we shall divide it into two kinds. First, unconscious; second, conscious.

The first kind bears no results. For instance, you suffer from hunger because you have no money to buy bread. If you have some bread and don't eat it and suffer, it is better. If you suffer with one center, either thinking or feeling, you get to a lunatic asylum. Suffering must be harmonious. There must be correspondence between the fine and the coarse. Otherwise something may break.

Excerpted from Views *from the Real World: Early Talks of Gurdjieff as Recollected by His Pupils,* New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1975. Reprinted by permission.

FEAR AND FORCE VERSUS EDUCATION:
A Study of the Effects of Coercion on Learning
by Charles G. Wieder

Part I:
Chapter 1. Schools: A Diagnosis

> ... the increasing duration of the process of formal education tends to incarcerate the student for many decades in an adolescence of limited responsibility in which he lives on a dole, thus obstructing the very process of maturation for which we are striving.
> ... when any training program lasts too long, independent spirits tend to drop out along the way, until only the docile, the submissive, and the uncreative survive the full indoctrination.
>
> - Lawrence S. Kubie, *Neurotic Distortion of the Creative Process*

Something is wrong with our schools. Ask anyone.

Then ask, "What?" Just what are the problems? Where are they? Who's to blame? What should we do? Answers that are unequivocal and advice that is constructive are far less common, you will find, than the universality of complaints.

As a teacher myself in the mid-1960's, the problems seemed enormous and pervasive; and while quite apparent to my emotional being, I was at a loss when I tried to understand them intellectually. Others had begun to express concern for our schools. Exuberant, compassionate authors - some scholarly, some bitter, many of whom were or had been teachers themselves - proclaimed that our system of education was failing to educate our children, and also failing our society. It was rare, however, that I was able to gather any practical wisdom from their writings. Frequently, the insights and complaints cited did not square with my personal observations. Even where I found myself in agreement with a critic's diagnosis of the symptoms, it was uncommon to find accompanying remedies that were applicable to my circumstances.

These educational and social critics were as a rule sensitive individuals, some more insightful than others. Many were apparently sincere in sharing my concerns for children and education. But, unfortunately, they were of little help to either my colleagues or to me beyond the expressions of sympathy and their pleas for change.

Many a concerned teacher was hurting in those days. Few of us had not felt what is expressed in these excerpts from letters written by a personal friend who *was* one of the finest teachers I have known:

> I got so down and frustrated with public school education I felt manic depressive. Considered taking off. Just quitting. *Anything.* It was so miserable: low teacher morale, little interest in anything, especially

the kids. I cried for three weeks! Finally resigned .... How can a person love kids so much but be so frustrated with teaching (red tape, propaganda, etc.).

About school: I guess it's the same old story about working with unmotivated teachers who don't care, doing the same things day after day ... and I try to organize field-trips but the faculty's too lazy to go with me and I can't take eighty kids alone; so the ideas fizzle out . . . so I resigned....

...teachers accuse me of being too idealistic. If someone can't or won't help me, they tell me I'm too idealistic, want to do too much, or too smart for my own britches, etc. And they tell me to just work .. then go home, forget work and have a good time .. well, good grief!

... decided not to resign. Unresigned. And I am now more than ever determined to fight for *education* - not schooling, not state accreditation standards or objectives. I'm going to teach kids to learn, and the administration can just get off my back.... Maybe I'll be fired soon and won't have to resign.

Sometimes I feel my mind is shriveling up and dying. Nobody at school stimulates me. I feel that I'm not able to do anything important. Don't even know how important my teaching is. I mean.... Love the kids, but I feel I could be doing something more constructive. Guess I'm trying to change the world. But my mind feels like a wad of clay sometimes....

[One month later]: I did a harsh analysis of my past two wasted years: I did no good artwork, accomplished nothing of value. Boredom, lack of stimulation, lack of growth, lack of total involvement about describes my two years as an "art teacher." And I cry every time I think how I spent those two years.

...I can't exist without people around who pick my brain and make me use it. And teaching has so numbed my brain that my body is following along. All in all, this has been the most strained, most painful year of my life. Conflicting theories of education - mine versus the Art Supervisor's

[expletive deleted]. Hers is: "You can teach art or you can teach children. You can't do both."

In our faculty rooms there was always an ample supply of frustrated co-workers with whom to share our sorrows. What we really needed to know was what changes were required and where and how to begin to bring the transformation about constructively.

As teachers, we probably should have known that ideas, if they are worth the words that express them, are acquired and evolve and are implemented gradually. Like the process of learning itself, changing the structure and the functions of schools would entail changing attitudes and beliefs. Time and patience would be required, and perhaps a good, clear, radical thought or two, with a touch of long-range planning.

This book represents an attempt to go beyond the criticism and the collective complaining about education prevalent in the 1960's. Attention will be focused on the causes and the consequences of certain harmful practices in American education - specifically, the incidence of coercive force and use of fear tactics in the public schools. Remedies will be outlined that are designed to reverse these trends which are deplored by students, teachers, and parents alike. Topics of discussion will include: a teacher's proper range of authority over students - the propriety of certain sanctions, constraints, and restrictions that are routinely imposed on students; the just establishment of behavioral limitations on students; and the proper range of individual student freedoms and rights. Then conclusions will be drawn regarding options students and parents should have, as well as the need for greater freedom and autonomy of teachers.

In essence, this book's central argument is:
1) that coercive force pervades today's schools, and that fear is a common motivational device;
2) that such fear and force are instructionally dysfunctional;
3) that, as a consequence of these conditions, students learn to dislike learning; and 4) that such tactics are educationally decapacitating.

A word on the methods of argument: frequently, reference will be made to common public school occurrences. Since it is most likely that both the reader and the author have had extensive firsthand encounters with the public schools, as students if not as teachers, this inquiry will invite the reader to introspect and will aim at helping him (her) to recall, and perhaps uncover, the conditions of his (her) own school experience. Such reminiscing, it is hoped, will provide the reader with a basis for understanding the book's argument in more personal terms, and will also enable him (her) to appraise more critically the author's position and recommendations.

These goals are far from simple to achieve. It may at times be difficult to recapture the vividness and the impact of our long-past school experiences. For this reason it is all the more important that readers make every effort to reconstruct, and if possible re-experience, the effects of their schooling.

Let us now begin this journey back into the roots of our own intellectual development by surveying what present-day experts are saying regarding the problems besetting our schools. What have today's educators, critics, and scholars,

both from within and outside the educational establishment, cited as the symptoms? Just how serious are the problems? What do they prescribe?

Every summer, an increasing expenditure amounting to millions of dollars is spent for repairs of broken windows in classrooms and school buses. The cause is neither any "act of God," nor normal wear and tear, but rather student vandalism. At an increasingly alarming rate, teachers have been assaulted by their students. Next to psychologists, a greater number of teachers are reportedly seeking psychiatric help than members of any other single profession. In certain urban areas, high school graduates have been found to have lower IQs on the whole than their drop-out counterparts.

From within the academic community, in one long-term study of schooling funded by the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, entitled *Equality of Educational Opportunity,* it was concluded that: [there is only] a small independent factor of variation in school facilities, curriculum, and staff upon [student] achievement... [and only a] small amount of variance in achievement explicitly accounted for by variations in facilities and curriculum (I).

In *Life in Classrooms,* the conclusion is drawn from several studies that "[there is] a large group of students who do not feel strongly, one way or the other, about their school experience. (2)

A common subject of study in today's education journals is the extent of academic achievement attributable to

schooling. Some studies have shown that teachers and schools can make a difference, however slight, in student learning. Other studies, like that of Coleman cited earlier, claim the contrary, that achievement is not significantly attributable to schooling. Thus, it remains a debate as to whether or not schools are good places for children as far as their education is concerned, not to mention their social and psychological development. As embarrassing as it may be, we are forced by the lack of evidence to admit that there are no clear educational grounds on which to justify the existing forms of public schooling. Yet the educational options available to parents are few and far between: there is little else with which to compare. Out of despair, from even the most conservative ranks, we find attempts to make schools more accountable or to alter radically their form, content, means, and ends.(3)

Taking for the moment a more generous stance, we must admit that schools do in fact vary somewhat in their faculties, administrations, relationships to the community, teacher-student relations, and so forth. Some schools, for example, are academically oriented, others vocational; some are socially oriented, others test-oriented, and still others are primarily custodial in their orientation.

Many of the more bitter critics of today's education have concerned themselves primarily with the uniformity among schools. And it is in their uniformity that most of the problems reside. But, if just for the moment, there are exceptions to the rule worthy of some consideration.

For most parents and beginning teachers, there are unfortunately few real alternatives to the public schools. That we must begin with this condition, however, does not imply that we must accept it: we should express our reservations publicly. This is where I, as a radical, part company with my revolutionary cohorts in the cause to educate our children. I feel that as long as teachers and parents and critics of the system are free to speak against it and to organize alternative approaches, there is hope; and with this hope, working within the system can be made tolerable. As scant as the options are today, being relatively free to criticize provides grounds for optimism. It remains for us as teachers and concerned parents to make our case that much more compelling, that we might, in effect, awaken those who have for so long acquiesced, and educate those who would like there to be something better but are unsure of where they can turn.

There are in fact some administrators and teachers who are quite competent and dedicated. Parents seeking a good education for their children, and concerned teachers who want to participate in the education of children should seek out these places when no alternatives to public schooling are realistically possible. All too often I have seen parents and teachers accept their plight, with perhaps a muffled complaint or two, but acquiescing nonetheless. Clearly, there are both deplorable and workable features of public schools; and both parents and teachers are still responsible for the quality of education that children receive.

If nothing else, we can abstain from participating in a school we find to be fundamentally miseducational. Some parents I know refrained from having children until they could assure them a good education. And a teacher may choose to work within a less than satisfactory teaching position without seriously compromising himself (herself), seeking out the more desirable aspects of the job situation. Fortunately, even some of the worst of our public schools still afford teachers a degree of autonomy which allows such selective participation. This autonomy is commonly the result of faculty and administrative disinterest in education at such schools, which regrettably, often causes considerable professional loneliness for the truly dedicated teacher.

Still, I would maintain that such situations can be made workable, livable, and even educationally meaningful. We are far better off than Robinson Crusoe, for we in fact do have a world outside that is accessible to us, and also the companionship of our students. Communication, serious intellectual work, and the sharing of studies are still possible. Sure it is nice if the outside world is interested in sharing our accomplishments, our discoveries, and our learning. But that is often not possible. Yet even when a dedicated teacher is completely alone in his or her concern for the education of the students, his (her) island-classroom is surrounded, not by a vast, deep ocean, but only by a shallow, narrow moat with at the most a tired, slow administrative crocodile or two. No one would even notice if the class left the island for an occasional field-trip. I have

even known some remarkable teachers who were able to work toward correcting some of a school's shortcomings from within their classroom sanctuaries.

What I personally find most deplorable is the grudging compliance of teachers and parents - for example, the teacher who remains at a position and constantly complains and apologizes, blaming whatever scapegoat is available for his (her) plight. Such unprofessional behavior can only be seen as a smoke-screen for feelings of personal inadequacy.

This is not to suggest that the critics of our schools have been misguided. Quite the contrary. Their educational criticism has been an important factor in awakening us to some very serious problems that had been accumulating mountains of dirt under our rugs. Their outcries of educational and moral indignation were touchstones to our seeking solutions to the problems.

In the 1960's, the depiction by the critics of our schools as essentially uniform in their oppressiveness and anti-intellectualism provided, in my estimation, a reasonably accurate rendering. But if we are truly seeking constructive alternatives, our primary concern must be to solve specific problems that affect the lives and educations of particular children, rather than merely to complain about existing conditions.

Then and now, we should not underestimate the importance of making clear, for instance, how unfortunate it is that teaching today so often involves the implementation of

harsh, dispassionate threats. There are still many who will not admit that teaching has become largely a matter of physical discipline and motivation by fear. Such conditions had to be brought to light, especially for those students, principals, parents, and even our fellow teachers who had come to regard capital punishment as part and parcel of the process of educational socialization. If need be, we must restate and repeat as often as necessary such arguments concerning restrictions on curriculum materials, the limitations of classroom and building design, the inadequacy of some school practices, the importance of community relations, and the like.

Before continuing our survey of school conditions, one problem should be noted - namely, the difficulty of ascertaining the meaning and significance of "findings" and claims concerning the functions and the effectiveness of our schools. If researchers are unable to accurately gauge the effects of schooling, what probably should be receiving greater attention are the consequences to students of the enormous investment of their time and energy in formal schooling.

There are crimes of omission as well as of commission. There are, for example, more ways to inhibit a child than by continually bewildering and embarrassing him (her): pathological social fear could just as certainly result from insufficient opportunity to talk with adults and peers on a one-to-one basis in an atmosphere of mutual concern and

respect. Starvation, in time, can have the same effect as poison.

What I am suggesting here is that the absence of any significant positive effect of schooling may take its toll in terms of intellectual disinterest, boredom, apathy, and the like.

With extensive documentation, educator-sociologist James Coleman draws the following conclusions concerning the lack of educational impact of schools:

> The fact [is] that the social composition of the student body is more highly related to achievement, independently of the student's own social background, than is any school factor.
>
> That schools bring little influence to bear on a child's achievement that is independent of his background and general social context; and that this very lack of an independent effect means that the inequalities imposed on children: by their home, neighborhood, and peer environment are carried along to become the inequalities with which they confront adult life at the end of school. For equality of educational opportunity through the schools must imply a strong effect of schools that is independent of the child's immediate social environment, and that strong independent effect is not present in American schools. (4)

Earlier in the report the same author writes:

> There is indirect evidence that school factors are more important in affecting the achievement of minority group students; among Negroes, this appears especially so in the South (where, generally, there is the lowest achievement). This leads to the notion of differential sensitivity to school variations, with the lowest achieving minority groups showing highest sensitivity. (5)

In other words, where schools do have a noticeable effect on students, it is either negative, or the students' educational deficiencies are compounded.

Let us examine one area of the school curriculum in some depth. Reading programs have occupied a central place in the curriculum since the founding of public schools when reading the Bible was the raison d'etre of schooling. In recent times there have been considerable expenditures of time, personnel, and research money put toward the development of reading curricula. But, in spite of the all-out unequalled effort, some students inexplicably leave schools unable to read. Reports indicate that the gap in the reading abilities of students tends to increase through the grades: at grade two, the best and worst readers in a classroom will usually be two years apart in their reading levels; and at grade six, there will be a six year discrepancy. But perhaps there is a more important question to be asking: to what extent do children read on their own, and what is it they are reading? And it might be as revealing to observe the reading habits of their parents, especially those who consistently prod their children to read more often. Keep in mind that it was not very long ago that these very same parents were themselves in reading groups much like those their children now endure.

We must also ask how children view their education. Is education seen as valuable to today's students? Do they enjoy learning? And what of their regard for teachers? Are

teachers seen as intellectual exemplars whom students aspire to emulate?

In surveys conducted in three New York City schools, a large percentage of sixth and seventh grade students—23.8% of the boys, 10.3% of the girls—reported that they dislike school. Among the boys questioned, 27.6% reported having mixed feelings, as did 20.7% of the girls.(6)

In another study reported by the same author, 33.3% of the eighth grade boys surveyed reported dislike for school, compared to only 15% of the boys in the fifth grade— not to imply that 15% is an insignificant figure! For girls, the increase was from 11% in the fifth grade to 16.9% in the eighth grade. (7)

Is it not time that we begin asking why?

Some say schools have gone too progressive; while others complain too liberal. Still others reply that schools have not made the curriculum relevant to children's interests. Other pronouncements include the need for the curriculum to focus on pressing social and environmental problems; while simultaneously, there is the demand that schools return exclusively to the "basics." One also hears the complaint that parents are not concerned enough about their children's education and are unsupportive of the teacher's efforts, while still others argue that teachers are incompetent. Some claim that teachers are too permissive in classrooms that are too "open." Others that teachers are too authoritarian and repressive. Some blame lack of financial support for our

schools, while others maintain that there is excessive waste and inefficiency.

The situation brings to mind the dilemma of the Jets in *West Side Story.* When they aren't dancing or fighting, the Jets are ignored, pushed around, and brushed aside by the authorities. In rapid succession, their problems are dismissed or explained away by parents, psychologists, and sociologists, over their painful cries that "deep down inside us there's good." It is interesting to note what the Jets themselves identify as their problems: environmental deprivation, parental upbringing, racio-cultural heritage, peer-group pressure, a corrupt society, and man's innate depravity.

Several authors severely critical of the system (Holt, Goodman, Neil, et al.) point out how much children learn outside of and prior to the beginning of their formal education. Roger Barker, for example, has found that elementary age youngsters encounter far more educational opportunities outside of school than within. And in *How to Raise a Brighter Child,* Joan Beck cites research by Benjamin Bloom stating that "after age eight, regardless of what type schooling and environment your child has, his mental abilities can only be altered about 20 percent."

Further along these lines of argument, there have been several "sensory deprivation" studies which suggest that the basis of much of our education is heavily dependent upon optimal periods of learning which occur during the preschool years. The evidence indicates: first, that early

learning sets the foundation for and establishes limits upon much of our later learning; and secondly, that if we do not develop a particular skill or gain a certain body of information during the optimal knowledge-acquisition period, we will probably never be able to achieve the level of competence we might otherwise have reached in that area. One is thus led to the view that schools are working for much smaller academic stakes than is commonly believed.

Currently there is an increasing concern that schools account for themselves. The number of years of formal schooling that are socially and financially required is increasing at a time when the supply of advanced degrees has surpassed the demand in both the economic and academic marketplaces. With "Head Start" and increasing preschool and kindergarten enrollments, schools are getting more customers at a younger age to serve longer sentences. Paradoxically, at the same time that a child's formal education has been prolonged, there are serious questions being raised concerning the effectiveness of that schooling. Are graduates of the system more wise and learned for the ordeal they have endured? Are they more insightful, sensitive, and creative? More understanding and considerate than they would have been under different educational circumstances? To what extent are schools missing their mark? Which students do schools fail to reach and teach?

As indicated earlier, the statistics on how much is not learned in schools and on how much is forgotten by students are embarrassing if not indicting. Student apathy, anxiety,

and the like are said to be reaching endemic proportions. And all this is occurring during a knowledge explosion, a period unmatched in technological progress and material provisions. Astounding scientific-technological accomplishments are today taken as commonplace though we admit to being confounded by it all. We are beset with a global military crisis, a disintegrating ecology, a depletion and pollution of natural resources, a series of anti-establishment rebellions, internal unrest, poor race relations, and so on *ad nauseam*. At their roots, all of these are educational problems.

In anticipation of those who may argue that the above survey is superficial because of a lack of "hard evidence," a temporary aside is in order. My reply to such a claim would go as follows. First and foremost, I would recommend that determination of success or failure of our schools should not rely too heavily on statistical-empirical data alone, especially at this formative state of our knowledge of the subject, for these reasons:

First, statistical-empirical data do not tell us all we need to know, especially about individual cases. Case studies and other inductive/deductive methods are required if we are to come to understand better all aspects of teaching and learning. After all the stats are in, we would still need to ask how many otherwise potentially creative, productive individuals have become dropouts, drug addicts, institutionalized. Even assuming for the moment that it were statistically ascertainable, would a thirty-percent failure

among students to read at grade level be considered a significant problem? How far below grade level would we be willing to tolerate? How are cut-off points to be determined? Would the danger signal be one-per-thousand unnecessary failures? One can even ask if a straight "A" report card implies success outside of school. And how concerned would we be to assess a student's emotional well-being?

Secondly, much if not most of what education is primarily concerned with is covert rather than empirically observable. The so-called "behaviors" with which educational psychologists are primarily concerned are mental. Cognitive/intellectual operations and their emotional-affective byproducts are simply not directly observable nor readily quantifiable.

This is not to say that educational achievement is undiscernible. Systematic, analytic means are available which can, with the help of a little inference, account for educational phenomena with reasonable accuracy. The key to such measurement, however, lies in the integration of empirical and analytic methods, of both inductive and deductive inquiry, of systematic introspection as well as careful "extrospection."

All the data and the complaints could be tabulated, computed, re-analyzed, and depicted by countless charts and graphs without bringing us any closer to understanding the nature and the causes of educational problems. Do we wait until all the combinations of statistical analyses are in before

acknowledging that our patient is in pain? First-aid is clearly indicated, as well as intelligent long-range educational planning. Evidence suggests that certain of our problems are fairly deep-rooted and widespread. It is clear that to some extent, whether by omission or commission, schools are indeed harming some innocent children. Corrective measures are long overdue.

Finally, I would argue that statistical-empirical data, apart from comprehensive analysis of the sort that has been suggested, will not add one whit to our understanding of education. Correlation is not causality. The question of what is responsible for a given state of affairs will, in the end, remain unanswered if our research methods are limited to such correlational and experimental approaches. Questions of the importance of such data will remain. The question of where to look for data in the first place will need to be given more careful consideration so that we might begin doing something with the libraries of accumulated data which tend to obscure more than they reveal.

In summary, there is one thing that can safely be said of the complaints about our public schools: that they touch upon a wide range of problems. To make matters more complicated, the discussions of these problems by school officials and boards of education are often less than lucid. We are neither clear concerning the culprits nor the issues themselves. Solutions to educational problems are not much closer at hand today than a decade ago. We have just begun asking intelligent questions. Lines of argument come from

virtually every conceivable direction and vary considerably in their clarity and focus. Next to the students, the parties involved with the weakest voice in this fiasco are the parents.

But we have at least broken the ice. If in their enthusiasm the critics of education have tended to be polemical in their attempts to confront the issues, it is because the problems have for so long been evaded, swept under the rug - and the issues are emotional ones. The lives of our children are at stake. What hopefully will begin to arise from the scattering of complaints and pleas is the realization that the problems are quite real and extremely worthy of our attention.

We must, however, keep in mind that even once found, proposed solutions to educational problems will not produce automatic remedies. Like problems that are psychological in nature, educational problems cannot be legislated out of existence. They must be unwound gradually with the patient(s) - teachers, students, parents, and others affected by school policies and practices - in on the diagnosis and the treatment. Those involved must themselves understand the nature of the remedies, and also see the value of being cured. Corrective measures must be administered in small doses. The slow, sometimes unsteady course to the cure will in fact amount to an education in itself.

Abrupt, punitive, or painful prescriptions for educational problems will likely have no more of an effect on

our society than such measures have had in the past on school children.

Enough of the symptoms have been enumerated. Consider the host of complaints duly acknowledged and registered. The stage is now set for an attempt to examine two root causes of the educational problems that have been cited [To be continued].

FOOTNOTES:

1. Coleman, James S., *Equality of Educational Opportunity,* Washington, D.C., U.S. Dept. of H.E &W., Cat. #FS 5-238-38001, p. 325.
2. Jackson, Philip W., *Life in Classrooms,* New York, Holt, Reinhart & Winston, 1968, p. 76.
3. See "Schools: Success or Failure" in Charles E. Silberman, *Crisis in the Classroom,* New York, Random House, 1970.
4. Coleman, p. 325.
5. Ibid., p. 297.
5. Study by Samuel Tenenbaum cited in Jackson, p. 47.
7. Jackson, pp. 56-60.

Charles G.Wieder has taught art from kindergarten through grade eight in public and private schools in New York, Florida and California. For the past eight years he has been an assistant professor of art education at the Florida State University, California State University at San Francisco, and, currently, at the Ohio State University.

THE PULSE OF LEARNING

by Richard Lewis

IT WAS ONE of those warm summer evenings. I was on my way home when, just at the entrance of the park where I had been sitting, I saw three small children chasing fireflies. I would have kept on walking, since it was getting late, but I lingered for a moment to watch them. The children seemed to be completely involved with what they were doing: the sweep of their arms as they thought they had closed their hands on a firefly's humming light; their bodies arching forward when what escaped them suddenly appeared

a few feet away; their excited whispers sifting quietly around us. Then quite unexpectedly, one of the children, sure that she had caught a firefly, came running to her father nearby—and opening her hand, proudly showed him what was inside. Both she and her father looked, but there was nothing there except her bare hand. No matter, off she quickly went back to her friends, dizzying themselves in their leaps and hoverings, trying to find out what it must feel like to have such particles of light so close to them.

A moment, perhaps - but the knowing of it, the poetry within it, wasn't about to leave me. I was touched by the way the children were so totally absorbed. For the briefest time they seemed to be an example of something being learned in which no part was absent. Everything - the senses, the mind, and the feelings - were in some balanced state of concentration; and to separate these elements would have been to take from these children a perfectly natural way to discover what they had not known before. The unity of this triad is the essential ground for this kind of learning - a learning which seems to be most evident when children play. I keep trying to discover how this sort of learning can be a recognized and cultivated part of education. Not an easy task, since so much of education today is more intent on separating our learning capacities than in bringing them together.

How stifling it is for so many children in our schools to find out somewhere after kindergarten (in some cases before) that the prerequisites of getting ahead as a learner in

school is to divide play from work, imagination from fact, feeling from truth. How confusing it must be for children to be told that their senses (hence their bodies) are not where they learn, and that real learning takes place only in the citadels of their intellects.

What unfortunately soon begins to seem true to the majority of children is that to succeed in school it is best to become a passive learner - as opposed to an active learner. One must not invent or discover, but imitate and acknowledge. One must not question and doubt, but accept and obey. Such a contract with passivity has spawned an educational dilemma that most educators are hard put to solve: how to relieve the contagious boredom affecting so many children (as well as teachers) once learning has been separated from the taproots of curiosity and imagination, from the sources of learning in which children think and feel, as well as play and work without having to subdivide these human capacities into scheduled and isolated periods of a day.

With our emphasis on scholastic learning, I believe we have denied what children already know about learning - not as an intellectual definition, but as an intuitive understanding of their own world. For most children, the instinct to learn, actively and enthusiastically, is most evident in their earliest years when they first begin to walk and talk - and as importantly, to play. What happens, if a supportive human bonding is reasonably intact, is the development of children's natural desire to learn - to move with their own

internal impulses to understand and to survive in the world evolving around and within them. These impulses - and these learnings - are not "schooled" as much as instinctual; they emanate from children, precisely because they are crucial to their existence, not just physically, but as a consciousness becoming aware of itself. In other words, a sense of inner and outer, of thought and feeling, of body and self, in some extraordinary fashion are working together through children; so that, just as a seed begins to assume the form of a tree, they begin to assume the form of their human aliveness.

THE IMPORTANT QUESTION is how we might bring this instinctual learning into schooling. What can be done to instill learning once again as an active - even passionate - concern? How to unite the broken triad? Perhaps for clues we have to go back to some of the qualities of our own earliest learnings - to the time, just as with those children chasing fireflies, when our learnings were somehow our hands and feet, indeed the entire experience of our bodies, sensorially probing the world around us. We have to find those moments that were never defined as learning - but their meanings are still with us: the time we walked in the snow and listened intently to our footsteps, or the time we fell down in the ocean and couldn't catch our breath. We have to remember that our learning, when we were very young, was not linear - it is a learning, as the novelist Eudora Welty noted in *One Writer's Beginning*, that

"stamps you with its moments. . . . It isn't steady. It's a pulse."

Because the boundaries of our learning had not been constructed for us as yet, everything was to be listened to - taken in, so to speak - in the safekeeping of our awareness: knowledge was not a subject matter broken into unconnected thoughts, our imagination was not different from reality, and play was the work we knew best. We were sensory beings related to the languages of our ideas and feelings. We knew something simply by the way we felt about it.

And it was the strength of our feelings which allowed us to empathize with so much around us. When we listened to stories, we became the wind and the sun and the serpents and the heroes. We could believe with Katherine, a six-year-old child, when she wrote: "Long, long ago people could see and feel the stars and sky because the sky was down so that people could touch and feel it."

Katherine might be telling us that the truth is that children - like ourselves - learn most deeply and personally when thought is joined with feelings and they experience the totality of their bodies responding to ideas. Thoreau suggested the importance of how "thoughts must live with and be inspired with the life of the body." (1) In a similar vein, it was Emily Dickinson who said:

> If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know that is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry. These are the only ways I know it. Is there any other way? (2)

Indeed, it is Dickinson's question which prompts me to reply that what is crucial to learning is to see it as poetic - that is, we must restore to learning the artistry within it. We must bring back to teaching the deepest respect for the art that is teaching, as well as the recognition that the artistic act, when it succeeds, incorporates the very triad of learning we are speaking of, so that mind, body and feeling are one entity. In his book *The Aims of Education,* Alfred North Whitehead, the philosopher and mathematician, stresses the need to make this triad of learning paramount to education:

> You must not divide the seamless coat of learning. What education has to impart is an intimate sense for the power of ideas for the beauty of ideas, and for the structure of ideas, together with a particular body of knowledge which has peculiar reference to the life of the being possessing it. (3)

We must, as Whitehead states, become more aware of the "life" of the learner - aware that even one's "thoughts" and "ideas" are themselves manifestations of this life, and pulsate, as do all living things, within the fluidity of the entire body, known to us as *the human being.* I cannot help noticing that even the descriptive phrase *human being* is in itself active, and intimates *that which moves.* For us to capitalize on this possibility simply means that the exchange, as well as the making, of our ideas and thoughts, can be a bringing together of all that is alive in ourselves and others, so that our feelings, our minds, and our bodies are no less than a personal integration through which the expression of life moves.

I WONDER NOW whether the children are still chasing those fireflies in the park? A number of days and nights have passed since I saw them - and I suppose they have found some new fascinations. Yet I am quite sure that somewhere in the memories of these three children, the pale phosphorescent glow of lights, which darted mysteriously away as the children tried to catch them, are still moving. I am quite sure that in each of these children something new has begun - and continues - and fills them with the excitement and pleasure of what there is to know. The shadows of their enlivened spirits - the poetry of their knowing - tells us much about how we might learn, with them.

FOOTNOTES:

1. H.D. Thoreau, *The Mind As Nature,* New York: Harper & Row, 1962, p. 59.
2. Emily Dickinson, *Selected Letters,* edited by Thomas H. Johnson, Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971, p. 208.
3. Alfred North Whitehead, *The Aims of Education,* New York: Macmillan, 1929, p. 23.

Richard Lewis is the Director of the Touchstone Center in New York City. His most recent books are *Out of the Earth I Sing, Miracles, Journey,* and *In the Night, Still Dark.*

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LETTERS:

Dear Mary,

Thank you for SKOLE! I've been involved with the coalition for two years and I can hardly believe that I've let something this good pass under my nose without reading it cover to cover until now. The latest issue has given me a wealth of new ideas for this living, learning, teaching experience called life. Dave Lehman's article on "Teaching the American Constitution" expanded my mind and has given me some good material for my (our) experimental Native American Studies class at the Farm School. I've also started a reading list of free-learning books suggested in SKOLE that I would like to read.

The real reason I've been sparked to write is to respond to a letter by Alan Klein which is published in the summer issue. In this letter, besides creating a little controversy, Alan calls for everyone involved in the alternative school movement to examine their commitment to democracy in education and how this commitment is carried out.

I personally believe that early coercion, however subtle, is fundamentally wrong and will eventually hinder the development of any person. I see the true nature of human beings (and everything else) as giving, free, and unconditionally loving and that we are simply trying to live our lives and recognize that which has been with us all along.

In my mind open meetings, practicing true equality, (freedom and responsibility) are the base of any human organization and without them the true potential of any organization will not be fully realized. To be in a circle of love and respect is a most healing experience, the kind of experience which can heal Mother Earth and her children. These are the philosophies which I try to practice in day to day life, education being a branch thereof. In actualizing these ideas is where the greatest difficulties lie for me.

I am currently in my last year of high school at the Farm School in Summertown, TN. Our high school's curriculum is based on the standard public school system of credits. In the high school this was decided largely by the students who founded it, me being one of them. My how time changes things!

We have an all-school meeting and class meetings but they haven't been successful and many people, particularly high schoolers, see it as a waste of time and would rather be doing something else.

All of the tactics that have been tried so far are eerily similar to the U.S. Government's tactics regarding drugs, the arms race, toxic and other waste, etc., etc., etc. In other words, these attempts to solve the problem actually serve as a distraction from the fundamental problems regarding coercion in school.

In my opinion, there are people within the Farm School community who are afraid to give up control or give up being controlled. They want there to be high standards

and participant involvement and they know of no alternative to subtle coercion. My goal for this last year at The Farm School is to at least make people aware of the other possibilities.

Our school is very young and I have complete faith that everybody involved wants the same thing, and will eventually change for the better. The Farm School, and The Farm, is very fertile ground for new ideas and practices.

This rounds up, for now, my commitment to democracy in education and how I am carrying out that commitment. I ask for any ideas regarding what we can do to soothe the fears and continue on our journey. Again I thank everyone for this meeting of minds we call the coalition (SKOLE, the Newsletter, etc.).

Love,
JOSH (AMUNDSON)
1-The Farm, Summertown,TN 38483

Dear Mary,

Enjoyed Vol. V, No. 1! , particularly your printing of Ted Sizer and Deborah Meier's articles. As you may already know we are one of the schools in the Coalition of Essential Schools, and I continue to be impressed with their efforts to radically restructure and refocus the U.S. high school - and I'm glad to see your interest and support for such public school reform....Very best wishes for the New Year.

In Peace,
Dave Lehman

Oh, and thanks for publishing my article!

Dear Michael (Traugot),

Thank you so much for sending me a copy of SKOLE! I enjoyed it thoroughly and found so much fascinating and helpful information in each article. I feel that the richness of experience and knowledge that was so evident in the authors of the articles in the summer issue of SKOLE is something that needs to be shared with the larger educational community. I think it is wonderful that alternative educators share their work and support each other, but what they do needs to be shared with more traditional educators also to show them there are other ways to teach and to learn, and that kids do benefit from alternative methods.

Some of the most common negative comments about alternative education is that it only works in very small schools and that it doesn't work with disadvantaged or inner city kids. I think Dorothy [sic] Meier's article about Central Park East speaks directly to those issues. I would like to see her article published in a more mainstream magazine so that the larger education community could learn about Central Park East and the concepts that are taught and practiced there.

Dave Lehman's article on teaching the American Constitution and *practicing* democracy as well as teaching it in the schools was very timely and, again, something more traditional teachers and administrators might benefit from being exposed to.

I would like to see members of the NCACS publicly address the issues that are being discussed in education circles today. I would like to see us addressing the issue of standardized testing *ad nauseam*. I would like to see us discuss the issue of pushing kids to learn too much too soon. When we have President Bush and the other members of the "Educational Summit" talking about increasing the "performance" of our students, I think it is especially important that the philosophy of alternative education be brought more to the forefront! (I wonder if anyone would be interested in writing an article tackling the use of the term performance in education?)

I believe we are facing a crisis in education. In the state of Ohio, as is true in many other states, they have increased the number of standardized tests required at various age levels almost to the point of the absurd. Teachers are having a hard time teaching their normal curriculum in their normal way because they feel that have to make sure they cover the material that will be on the standardized tests. If their students don't do well on the standardized tests, the teachers are held accountable, so teaching to the tests becomes the norm. To make matters worse, the students are experiencing so much anxiety over the testing that it is interfering with their ability to learn. It has become an increasingly impossible situation. I know that NCACS members could make some strong and persuasive arguments that might help people see that standardized testing can be very detrimental to learning.

I asked one teacher, who teaches in a public school here how he copes with it all - and he says he just tries not to think about the outside pressures and to focus on what he does best, which is to teach. Others leave the profession because they aren't able to teach the way they feel children learn best.

My daughter just graduated from a gem of a school, a small public alternative high school which is a part of a large public high school in a very conservative, traditional community. It is getting more and more difficult for the staff at the alternative school to do what they know so well how to do because their students still have to pass the same tests and requirements as the students in the traditional high school.

The alternative school community has a message to share that is vital to the well-being of the young people in this country. We need to speak out in a strong voice so that more people can know that there are viable and successful alternatives to the traditional education system (which seems to be letting large numbers of children down). I am interested in doing what I can to bring the philosophy of alternative education to greater public attention. If anyone would like to work with me on this I would be glad to meet with them, talk to them, write to them; whatever it takes. It has been my experience that many alternative school teachers are so involved in their teaching that they don't have the time or energy to share what they do through writing. Right now I am not teaching, so I do have the time and energy to write

and to work on trying to get more articles on alternative education published. If you or any other members of NCACS think there is any value to my doing this, or if you have any ideas that you think might be better, or if you have some suggestions on how I might go about doing what I've suggested, please let me know.

Sincerely,
Valerie Dinkeloo
7965 Boothbay Ct.
Powell, OH 43065

ΣΚΟΛΕ

The Journal of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools

Summer, 1990, Vol VI, No 2

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ΣΚΟΛΕappears twice a year. It publishes articles related to the subject of alternatives or innovations in education, critiques of other forms of education, theoretical considerations associated with schools, schooling, learning and teaching, as well as accounts of individual schools themselves and "how-to" articles. We welcome manuscripts by educators, interested by-standers, parents and thoughtful students of all ages. Interesting photographs showing activities connected with learning/teaching are also welcome, but will not be returned except under very unusual circumstances.

Material to be submitted for publication must be received by the December 1 and June 1 deadlines. Manuscripts will not be returned unless extreme emotional blackmail has been practiced by the author, and should be typed with nice black type. Send your manuscripts to Mary Leue, 20 Elm St., Albany, NY 12202.

Inquiries concerning membership in NCACS (the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools) or subscription rates to either ΣΚΟΛΕ or the National Coalition Newsletter should be addressed to the NCACS National Office, 58 Schoolhouse Rd., Summertown, TN 38483. Back issues of ΣΚΟΛΕ may be ordered from the above address, at $6.00 a copy.

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ΣΚΟΛΕ

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ALBANY, NEW YORK

LAU

Editorial Comment

Here's the new issue. I hope you like it. But equally, I hope - and pray! - that if there is something you *don't* like about it that you will find within yourself the strength and commitment to our joint enterprise to write me about it - and, if you can, give me permission to publish it and start a lively discussion in these pages. Even better, write an article!

What I would like to see happening is the continued growth of trust among us such that it is possible for us all to own our feelings, speak our minds to each other, do what we have to do to feel acknowledged by each other in exactly the way we each are as individuals who are members of a joint enterprise of real value and human relatedness. I think we made more progress toward that end in Washington.

Ron Miller's article on the "us" he sees from his particular fringe of the action can be extremely helpful as one perspective we may not have taken into account in assessing ourselves, either as individuals, as individual schools or as members of the Coalition. It's true, you know, we are "all chiefs and no Indians," or, to use Ron's label, super-independent. I think Olivia, Ed, and probably a few others, were struggling to get this perspective across to the maverick fringe - and I include myself in the latter group.

The whole thing is paradoxical, because we could go on arguing with the "them" of "us" until the coalition finally split entirely into factions, as Ron warns about the dangers and difficulties of acting cooperatively, and never get down to noticing that the *content* of the dogma isn't the core issue. Dogma can be about not wanting one member to speak for the others - or about "democracy" in education, or about not scapegoating anyone, or about anything which is held as sacred - i.e., a dogma for that person or group! It can even be about allowing for individual differences! The point is that "being with" is not the same as "believing that."

The problem is that anyone who holds to a dogma sees himself himself as a member of a tiny, truth-telling minority and anyone who disagrees as a dishonest re-definer of experience. This makes it easy to claim "integrity," when anyone challenges his dogma - and away we go! I do not exclude myself in this process!

Well, I for one learned a lot at the Washington meeting. As Olivia and Ron are saying, we've got a big job to do. I hope this issue will be helpful in the process of learning to "be with" each other.

The editor (aka Mary)

PROFILE
METROPOLITAN SCHOOL OF COLUMBUS:

An early alternative school that failed -but not really! Lu Vorys, one of our real pioneers, takes some deep breaths, faces her pain and tells the history of her life as it unfolded for her within this magnificent learning process we call "school." It starts with her vivid description of the writing of that history. Thanks, Lu!

Dear Mary,

I started writing this on the way home from the Conference while jiggling along in the camper truck where I was stuffed in with nine people! Some of my deepest inspiration came during that time. **BUT** my article came out 43 pages long! Ever since then I've been trying to cut it down without losing the essential messages. I've found this **VERY** difficult because each detail of the story is so precious to me. I hope this shortened and simplified version still says something worthy of ΣΚΟΛΕs readers but if it doesn't, send it back for another re-write. I've had a great time doing it. At one stage I had you and the Free School in the text because I so admire that you were able to create a community in the inner city. I'd still like to compare notes more extensively on our parallel paths and why yours succeeded and mine didn't. Or does this article make that clear?

Hope this gets there in time. Love, Lu

A Twenty Year Perspective on Alternative Schools From One Person's Experience

by Lucia Vorys

It's difficult now, twenty years later, to remember the crisis proportions of the unrest that was sweeping the country during the late 60's and early 70's out of which the alternative school movement, as well as other grass-roots movements, was born. It was like the pre-Civil War years in intensity and, like them, the cause was oppression - oppression of blacks by whites, and, one hundred years later, of women by men, of children by adults, of students by administrators, of doves by hawks, of the poor by the rich - in fact, of the powerless by the powerful. In 1968 Martin Luther King, black champion of human rights, was assassinated. Two months later, Senator Bobby Kennedy, like his older brother before him a symbol of idealism in our national government, was also assassinated.

On the local scene, Ohio State University was surrounded by a ring of National Guard soldiers through which my oldest daughter, a freshman in 1970, had to walk each day. Outside in the campus parking lot her tires were slashed. She and her classmates were tear-gassed when they joined a protest march in Washington, D.C. against the Viet Nam war. I'll never forget the hurt look in her

innocent eyes when she confessed to me, "I don't even understand what this is all about."

Even within our family the sides of civil war were being painfully drawn. My husband, the father of our four children, was a prominent lawyer in a prominent firm, a sought-after member of the power structure of the capital city of Ohio. I, on the other hand, having been trained in a wealthy establishment family and in the finest schools to serve the power structure without question, was now waking up to the need for radical changes in the system because our children were caught as very questioning teenagers in the throes of these times. Through a number of rude awakenings as I experienced the stifling limitations of the educational system not only as a parent but as a teacher, I realized that educational change was my calling. So amid, and because of, all these disturbances, in 1969 the first alternative school in central Ohio, Metropolitan School of Columbus, was conceived. I was the first to voice its purpose but was joined instantaneously by supporters from various segments of the city's population who were similarly inspired and determined.

Our first brochure stated the goals of the school:

> 1) ...to provide an educational atmosphere conducive to the fullest development of each student's creativity, expressiveness, sensitivity, curiosity, independence, judgment, and understanding of the world and of himself; [vestiges still of male chauvinism!] and

2) by so doing, to serve as a pilot for other educators, schools, and communities to follow or modify in an effort to expand the availability of quality education to the children of Columbus and elsewhere.

Then it listed objectives including heterogeneous student body, active involvement of students and parents as well as teachers, open communications, use of the city's educational resources, and so forth. Its underlying premise was respect for the innate natural wisdom of children, mothers, and blacks. The school began with 60 elementary students housed in the education wing of the First Congregational Church, a cosmopolitan, interracial inner city church within walking distance of the city's cultural resources and public transportation.

I remember with nostalgia the excitement and high sense of mission of those early years. Parents volunteered in the classrooms. Antioch students interned with us. A soft-spoken black man from Ghana headed one classroom; an alternative-minded black woman frustrated with teaching in the Columbus public schools another; and an angry young radical man from the public schools in Detroit who had advertised in The New Schools Exchange "Teacher Drop-Out" section, headed the third classroom. Children of different ages were mixed together in what we called family groups. We built a playground in the church parking lot and moved in a trailer which

we equipped as a workshop. We took daily walking field trips to such places as the library, the Center of Science and Industry, the city swimming pool, the Art Gallery, The Dispatch printing company, and by car to the zoo, fossil ridge, outlying farms, and parents' homes. We compiled a guide book, "child-tested", called "Around Columbus with Kids" and sold it as a fund-raiser. We also had innumerable spaghetti dinners, yard sales, bake sales, and craft sales to raise funds. We scrounged teaching materials from our friends' and our own children's rooms and surplus library and school sales. I headed up the solicitation of contributions from foundations, corporations and individuals. I also chaired the Board of Trustees the first year, trying to facilitate communication and cooperation amongst business executives, minority parents and university professors.

During the first three years we changed directors three times until finally we had an effective triumvirate; Judy Zilber who lived and breathed the soul of the school and worked with kids and parents; Katy Gould, a credentialed educator who worked with the teachers as well as the State Board of Education; and I, who took on the fund-raising and the Metropolitan School Board. In 1971 Dave Lehman's family arrived in Columbus from Greenbriar, an alternative community and school in Texas which he had helped found. They enrolled their two children in Metropolitan School, and

he skillfully facilitated evening encounter groups for our school community. In 1972 he founded the Ohio Coalition for Educational Alternatives Now (**OCEAN**) as a statewide network of the twenty alternative schools that had suddenly sprung up in Ohio. At **OCEAN**'s first Conference in 1974, two hundred attended and the keynote speaker was Ed Nagel, whose lawsuit challenging the state's constitutional right to regulate non-public schools we had read about in the *New Schools Exchange Newsletter.* Since Metropolitan School had just that year struggled through the politics and red tape of becoming accredited by the Ohio State Board of Education, even surviving public condemnation by the State Superintendent of Schools, Ed Nagel's story read like a fairy tale of a knight-in-shining-armor slaying the dragon. In the movement now we were connecting with other alternative schools around the country and finding we shared a common mission, a common experience of persecution, and a common struggle to survive financially. We became as close as brothers and sisters burning with the fire of revolution to free the children from "all forms of social, political, and economic oppression." *

I guess the church never expected Metropolitan School to be so successful an alternative or so disruptive of their pristine Gothic

* from the by-laws of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools

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facilities and reverent atmosphere, although I continued to believe our program was the very embodiment of reverence for the Spirit of each human being. They asked us to leave at the end of our third year there, 1973. The school relocated in a succession of unused public school buildings, but these locations, outside the inner city, and the rents we had to pay for them, took its toll on our program and our finances. Finally a dream emerged for the location of the school that we could hardly have imagined manifesting in reality. A group of us climbed up on the roof of a condemned building in down-town Columbus and became ecstatic imagining how this and the other condemned old mansions on the block could be used as a school community; Lillie Mae wanted to run a thrift shop; Judy Zilber a coffee shop where we could meet and generate our own entertainment; George Jameson his own barber shop, myself a music studio. We could even house teachers and welfare parents on the block.

Now came the fatal mistake that ended Metropolitan School. In my enthusiasm to actualize the vision, I trusted the city's leading power figures to help me with the project. They proceeded to provide the legitimacy to attract large funding grants to get the old houses renovated and a brand new building constructed for Metropolitan School. But my own husband, who had offered big

money and his name on a prestigious super Board to support the project, later used his power, along with that of the other "super stars" on the Board, to vote out the very spirit and life of the school in favor of a more "professional" appearing institution.

I realize now how much naive faith I still had in the idealism of the city's leadership and how little faith in the power of the staff, parents, and children, which had been weakening because of burn-out. Many of the original parents, staff, and community supporters were becoming discouraged with the extreme amounts of energy and money the school was taking. I was one of them. My energy was being pulled between an extreme family situation in which my husband and I were polarized, and the grandiose needs of the new school project. Mostly I worried intensely about our three daughters, one of whom was seriously ill, and the others who had left home seeking a different life-style from the conventional one offered at home. Because of their father's disapproval of this, I took all the responsibility for their choices and worried about them alone.

During all these enormous changes the first National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools conference was held in a Salvation Army Camp north of Columbus in 1979. Before it started we assembled at our new $750,000 building, which I proudly showed off, marveling myself at how far we had come. I should have known then that the end was in sight, since the dream

was actualizing on a remarkable material level, "thanks" to the values of the "super board," but at the more subtle cost of losing the essence and heart of the school.

After three years on the job Katy Gould, our wonderful director, burned out and the Board hired a new male director who soon evidenced his fear of children, especially alternative children. One thing he *was* good at, however, was organizing a professional-looking office. I remember how proud he was of his new strapping tape dispenser! He was a fairly successful fund raiser too. On the surface it looked as if everyone was getting enough of what they wanted to overlook the compromises for the time being. I was happily teaching violin to Metropolitan School students in my new studio next to the school. George Jameson set up his barber shop and Judy Zilber holding the school program and its eighty students together on the front lines. We were blissfully unaware that the new director, in collusion with a new Board chairman who had no history with the school, was strategizing to fire Judy Zilber and "upgrade" the staff to what they considered a "professional" level.

Judy was an embarrassment to the school's first-class image. Her desk was always messy and she didn't change her direct, deeply honest style of communication for anyone, be they prestigious or not. In January of 1979 the Board held a secret meeting at which they voted to fire Judy. Immediately thereafter the

entire school community, the Board, and the "super board" were in an uproar. For three months we held meetings to try to heal the rift but supporters of Judy and the original participatory philosophy of the school would not compromise and neither would the new people in power. We old-timers could not believe what was happening. I felt stabbed in the back. With broken hearts Judy and I cleared all our stuff out of the school, confessing to each other how strong an urge we felt to throw stones through those fancy new windows. We grieved for all the dashed hopes of students and parents who had entrusted them to us. I was bitter that the privileged, the supposedly well-educated, the power elite of Columbus, had scuttled my ship and with it the most wonderfully diverse, lively, creative, and caring crew of kids and parents I had ever known.

With Judy and me completely out of their way the Metropolitan School Board hired all public school staff for the coming year, 1980-81. By December all but one student had dropped out and so the school closed forever. The "super board," with an eye to business, immediately rented the building to a ballet company. By now the other buildings in the block were also filled with paying customers; government-funded social service agencies and cultural groups backed by the wealthy. Grass-roots found no fertile soil here.

Meanwhile Judy and her loyal followers had started over

again in a shabby abandoned public school building shared with several other counter-culture groups: tenant rights, recycling, a food co-op. I tried to help out but my heart was no longer in it. Judy's school folded in two years. In the back of my mind a new vision was forming.

If the main stream community wouldn't support an alternative school in its midst, the school would have to form its own alternative community around itsself. I envisioned it on a large piece of land off of which we could support ourselves while raising and educating our children in a wholesome environment. In 1981 I left my husband and home of thirty years to move to a remote area of the Ozarks with a large home-schooling family experienced in farming, to start such a community. We advertised our intentions in *Mothering Magazine*, *Mother Earth News*, and *Growing Without Schooling* and were deluged with inquiries. Within a year three other families had joined us permanently and countless others had visited. Like the early pioneers most of our energy went into growing food and building houses, (five in three years), very little into democratic decision-making or conflict resolution. By 1984 serious dissension and stress broke up the group. This was another heart-breaking experience, but as with Metropolitan School I was learning what were the essential ingredients for maintaining a school which "marched to a different drummer." The results of this

knowledge are now in full swing,but I still had another educational experience to go through before coming to my present place.

In 1987 I moved to Santa Fe Community School (SFCS) with which I had kept in touch over the years. SFCS had started as an alternative school in 1969, had also had its struggles swimming against the mainstream and trying to stay afloat financially, and was now likewise moving towards becoming an alternative residential community with the school as a part of it. After 15 years of experience it now had its democratic decision-making process functioning effectively. I joined in with them whole heartedly for several vears, learning how integrated and unified a group can become when each of its members is empowered to voice his or her thoughts and feelings fully and to have them responded to by the group. But it soon became apparent to me that what I longed for was a location that wasn't so close to the city, so subject to its consumerism, competition, pollution, and regulations. Santa Fe's dry desert sand and shortage of water defeated my attempts to grow even so much as a blade of grass, and I felt that growing our own food was basic to our community's self-support.

After a three year search for a rural site, in 1987 several of us from SFCS moved to Paonia, Colorado, a small town nestled in a verdant agricultural valley surrounded by wilderness and snow covered Peaks. Here again was an alternative little school, Lamborn

Valley School, in need of a community to support and operate it.

This time our community took plenty of time first to form deeply trusting relationships and find common spiritual ground. Then we developed a consensus process for decision-making. Now we are gradually working out how to share expenses, land, work, and the fruits thereof. The town, only a mile away, provides opportunities for supplementary income and educational resources without infringing on our life-style. In fact, an influx of "hippies" into the town during the 60's is credited with the presence of a community-run public radio station, an environmental newspaper, and an excellent health food store, in addition to our school.

We are still in the process of working out the balance between the families involved only with the school and those of us farming and living on the land around it. None of these families can afford to pay full-time teachers' salaries so partly by necessity, partly by preference, we each teach part-time, work part-time, and offer group schooling part-time. This kind of cooperative effort requires a very flexible organization which in turn requires deeply honest and frequent communication. We meditate together and ask within ourselves for the highest guidance concerning the needs of the group and the land we steward.

Twenty years ago I never could have imagined how wonderfully different kids raised in a free and natural environment

would be. They are self-motivated, responsible, competent, eager to learn, kind to each other, and real with adults. Respect between children and adults is sincere and natural. The mixture here of school and community, of children and adults, of work, learning and play is deeply rewarding. Burnout is no longer a problem because of the flexibility and interchangeability of the members and the high degree of resourcefulness of the children. I stay refreshed by participating in a variety of activities but none of them for longer than I wish; teaching academics, teaching and playing violin, working in the garden, communing with other member of the group, playing, hosting visitors from far away places, going on occasional trips, and periodically retreating to thebeautiful mountain wilderness surrounding us.

My own children have learned as I had to the hard way not to give away their power but to believe in their own unique ability to actualize their dreams. What I particularly enjoy is watching the results of our family's evolution in three generations. I started an alternative life-style at age forty. My children started in their teens. My grandchildren, the oldest of whom is fifteen, have never known any other way. They are incredible people!

In conclusion, I would like to try to extract some principles from my twenty years of experience in the hopes that they may be helpful to others as a way of thinking about how to maintain

truly alternative education. I believe we are dealing with three basic ingredients here:

first, a quality of upbringing for children which we refer to as "school" because that is what the law requires;

second, a community of adults who are inspired to be the motivating energy and who maintain their inspiration by nurturing their relationships and empowering each other through a consensus process of decisionmaking;

third, a material base of support which may be property, money, or one's labor.

The challenge is to merge all three elements into action that is fully economical of energy, in the deepest and most comprehensive sense. The integration must be so complete that the living and learing of the children happens simultaneously with the activities of the adults who are choosing creative work that is nurturing at the same time it is meeting practical needs. This is the only way I've seen that anyone can afford the highest quality of education for their children, in terms of time, energy, and money. And it's the most satisfying life-style I've ever experienced. In these days when the survival of the planet is at stake, it is time for us to get back to living according to this ecological principle, as nature intended.

Lu Vorys has been a staunch, thoughtful and deeply honest member of the Coalition for lo these many years. We have loved and depended on her a lot in a great many ways. It is high time we also began acknowledging her unique role in the birth and continuing survival of our organization.

Ed.: What follows is a preliminary statement defining what its authors see as the necessary ingredients for an educational philosophy which might be termed "holistic." Since Ron Miller, editor of *Holistic Education Review*, from whom it came to us, is deeply involved in the evolution of a new umbrella organization which would include alternative schools as well as others which adhere to a particular doctrine or "way" of teaching/learning as defined by some one person or group (e.g., Rudolph Steiner, John Dewey or Maria Montessori) and has shared this statement with us, it seems proper to print it, even though we have not been officially authorized to do so. See his article following the statement for a full exprtession of his views on how it feels to struggle with public acceptance for his model.

ELEMENTS OF THE HOLISTIC EDUCATION VISION

Holism emphasizes the challenge of creating a sustainable, just and peaceful society in harmony with the Earth and its life. It involves an ecological sensitivity - a deep respect for the diversity of life forms and cultures on the planet.

Holism seeks to transform the way we look at ourselves and our relationship to the world by emphasizing our innate human potentials - the intuitive, emotional, imaginative, creative and spiritual, as well as the rational, logical and verbal.

Given this approach, how can education be restructured to better serve the children of the world?

Holistic education is not a particular curriculum, methodology or package of techniques; it is a set of working assumptions that include, but is not limited to:

* Learning is an inner process of self-discovery and integration.

"Up to age twelve, there is no point to formal subjects or a prearranged curriculum. With guidance, whatever a child experiences is educational. . . Teachers for this age are those who like children, pay attention to them, answer their questions, enjoy taking them around the city and helping them explore, imitate, try out, and who sing songs with them and teach them games. Any benevolent grown-up -- literate or illiterate -- has plenty to teach an eight year old; the only profitable training for teachers is a group therapy and, perhaps, a course in child development."

Paul Goodman

- Learning is a collaborative, cooperative activity, respecting the unique contributions that every individual can make.

- Human intelligence is a multi-faceted capacity whose vast potentials we are only beginning to understand.

- *Whole brain* thinking involves high-order (contextual), intuitive and creative ways of knowing the world on many levels..

- Learning is a life-long relationship with our natural social and spiritual environments; therefore all life situations may facilitate learning, and the idea of "schooling" needs to be expanded to recognize this.

- Learning should be exciting, joyful, active, self-motivated, encouraging and supportive.

- Education is fundamentally a dynamic, open human relationship. Teaching is a *calling* which aims to serve humanity.

- Our present culture does not encompass all our possibilities; therefore education should be a dynamic process of growth.

- Education should cultivate a critical awareness of the moral, social, technological and political context of learners' lives.

- A holistic curriculum, whatever its particular content, must be interdisciplinary, with an integrated, global and ecological focus.

The Difficulty of Building Coalitions in Alternative Education: Lessons From *Holistic Education Review*

by Ron Miller, Ph.D.

In March, 1988, the first issue of ***Holistic Education Review*** came off the press. Five thousand copies were distributed to educators at public and alternative schools, to college professors, parents and other citizens interested in education. ***HER*** sought to bring together, in one professional publication, the various educational movements and methods that develop the "whole person" - and it attempted to address the social and political issues which these movements entailed. This was a promising and fertile area which no other publication adequately covered, and we thought that ***HER*** would spearhead a new movement to unify the many "alternative" approaches in education.

Now, two years later, it is quite evident that this movement is off to a very slow beginning. Even as public education has come under more intense criticism and the concept of "schools of choice" has gained credibility, the issues addressed in the pages of ***HER*** have failed to generate significant interest or discussion. The articles in ***HER*** have only rarely been cited in any segment of the educational press - scholarly, professional or alternative, and more importantly, educators who are already "holistic" - Montessori and

Waldorf people, progressive and humanistic educators, alternative and home schoolers - have consistently declined to respond to *HER*'s appeals for dialogue and cooperation among their various groups. In this article I want to explore the issue behind *HER*'s uncompleted mission.

Information overload

Probably the simplest, and most benign, explanation for the lack of response is that educators are very busy people! Adults who work daily with young people are preoccupied, and usually quite exhausted, by their demanding work. I know this from personal experience: I started my career as a Montessori teacher and felt it necessary to leave teaching in order to give adequate attention to my more philosophical, scholarly interests.

But even when teachers are interested in philosophical reading (what conventional education calls "professional development"), there is an incredible profusion of information circulating out there today. It is my full-time job to stay on top of the literature in alternative and humanistic education, and even I am overwhelmed by its sheer quantity as well as its diversity! From Whole Language to critical pedagogy to the threefold social order to unschooling to developmentally appropriate curriculum, there is an astounding amount of thinking and publishing happening in this

field. I like to think of *HER* as the single most concise, comprehensive digest of all this information, but even so, there is a lot of competition!

Maybe people perceive the ***Review*** as just another magazine, rather than realizing it is the only educational journal which brings these many perspectives together. If that's the case, we need to present *HER* more as an antidote to information overload, rather than a contributing factor.

However, leaving aside the unavoidable problem of information overload, my experience with the ***Review*** has revealed a number of issues, which I think are quite serious, that are preventing alternative education from becoming a unified, effective movement.

Personal vs. Social Change

One basic issue is a conflict between those who view alternative education as a personal (or family) endeavor, and those who see it as a social movement. I first became aware of this conflict while pursuing my doctoral research, when I found that some educators, while genuinely holistic in their approach, were content to accommodate themselves to their society and its values, while others were more*radical*. This conflict was a major issue for the progressive education movement; it came to a head when George S.

Counts charged that many of his colleagues were child-centered romantics and dared them, instead, to be truly progressive. (*Dare the School Build a New Social Order?*, 1932). This conflict has popped up recently in NCACS, in the debate over whether the Coalition is becoming too "political."

In one sense, this conflict results from a difference in personal temperament or style. Some people do not want to fight against society and its institutions, but want to live their own lives in peace; others thrive on politics and controversy. There must be room for both styles in an alternative movement. Each approach has something to offer, because to achieve the ideal world that we'd all like to live in, we will need to nurture each other quietly, one at a time, and also to raise hard questions about the culture that puts so many obstacles in our way. Not everyone is comfortable doing both things, so we need both kinds of people in our movement.

But there is a serious problem when these personal styles become congealed into ideological positions. The personal change side in its extreme takes the form of flaky New Age idealism or back-to-the-land survivalism, while the social change side becomes an angry, intolerant, leftist crusade. Neither of these hardened positions will bring about a genuine, humane transformation of education, family life or our culture. If the quiet, perhaps spiritually oriented personal change people and the activist, political, social

change people cannot even talk with each other and learn from each other, then our movement is lost; this is precisely what is keeping the Green movement, which is so promising, from getting off the ground in the U.S.

Personally, I believe the alternative education movement needs to be radical rather than accommodating; I think educational problems are, at root, cultural and social problems. However, the challenge is to be radical in a humane, spiritual way - not to be angry left-wing enemies of society. I believe that this balanced perspective in the ***Review*** keeps our circulation down, because extremists on both sides are not satisfied.

Group Loyalty

I have a favorite saying which calms me whenever I get confused by the overwhelming diversity of social and educational movements: "There already is every point of view in the world." In other words, no matter what idea or ideology we might cook up to explain or reform the world, someone has already thought of it, and there is probably already a movement dedicated to bringing it about. To carry this point further, it means that there is no single right way; there is no monopoly on Truth, but a wide array of paths that each give one perspective on it, one piece of it.

This is the underlying premise of ***Holistic Education***

Review. We believe that "free school" people - followers of John Holt, A.S. Neill, etc. - have valuable things to say, while Montessori people and Waldorf people and Deweyan progressive people and learning style researchers and global educators also have valuable things to say. The Truth, whatever it ultimately turns out to be, must be a composite of all these valuable teachings - it cannot be the one method or the one attitude that any one group holds to distinguish itself from the others.

Unfortunately, I have found that a large number of alternative educators, perhaps a large majority, hold fast to their own group's methods, definitions and ways of thinking. There is almost no sharing between groups, almost no cross-fertilization of thinking. ***HER*** has been spectacularly unsuccessful in its efforts to encourage dialogue; readers don't even write short letters in response to our articles. It appears that most alternative educators are quite satisfied to remain steadfastly loyal to the one method and one movement they affiliate with. I believe this is a significant fault.

If the alternative school movement is ever going to have a significant effect on education in this country, it is going to have to become a unified coalition of humanistic, progressive, global, ecological, holistic educators. Otherwise it is no more than a disjointed bunch of cults. But this issue is related to the personal vs. social change issue; people who are not interested in "having a

significant effect on education" will not be motivated to join with potential allies - they don't need them. Perhaps not, but I would like to point out that they are missing golden opportunities to enrich their understanding and practice. Whether or not we adopt their entire systems, people like Maria Montessori, Rudolf Steiner and other educational pioneers have offered profound insights into human development and the educational process. Any of us can learn from them, and can clarify our own thinking even in arguing with their ideas.

Hyper - Independence

Alternative educators are independent folks - that's why they're alternative in the first place. They do not accept the role of content, obedient citizen/employee/consumer which this culture expects us to fill. Thank God for the alternative movements; I seriously believe that, despite the Bill of Rights and our other trappings of democracy, this country would slide into fascism without the continued rebelliousness of people like alternative educators. We need more of them!

But independence taken too far leads into a sort of libertarian atomism - "You leave me alone and I'll leave you alone." This is a fine antidote to social homogenization, but it is hardly the basis for a humane community. Unfortunately, I have come across this jealous

individualism all too often in alternative education movements. Even people who agree with each other are suspicious of joining together, lest their cherished independence be threatened. For example, this has had an adverse effect on efforts to organize a national home schooling movement. Now, I totally support home schooling as a positive educational choice - in fact, even with all my interest in various innovative types of schools, I may eventually choose to home school my own son. I also recognize that most home schoolers are sociable people who do not mean to isolate themselves or their children. Nevertheless, from what I have seen, I feel the need to encourage home schoolers - and all alternative educators - to balance their strong desire for independence with what the anarchist Kropotkin called "mutual aid." We are all in this together, and we do need each other's help.

This jealous individualism can be a real barrier to our success in alternative education. It is really unhelpful for us to be highly defensive of our beliefs and practices, feeling them threatened from every quarter. It contributes to the intense group loyalty I described above. Many are suspicious of organizations, but desperately need them. I don't think this is a healthy situation. I think we all need to cultivate a greater openness to allied points of view rather than be personally threatened by them. We need to be less egoistically *invested* in our ideologies and our movements. Our

primary concern should be the unfolding lives of the children in our care; we should see our work as serving new life, new truths, new paths - rather than as a way of validating our own beliefs. We do need to defend the new life that emerges from within our children and ourselves against the repressions of this culture - but this is not the same as defensiveness.

So What?

It is not the purpose of this article to inspire every reader, after finishing it, to race to their checkbooks to send me $16 for a subscription to the ***Review*** - though that would be nice. It is also not my purpose to suggest that alternative movements should discard all their different approaches and join my "holistic education" movement. The last thing we need is yet another movement. Besides, there is no one holistic approach: if you are nurturing the development of the whole person, no matter what style or methods you use, you are already a holistic educator.

But I think the points I've raised are important nonetheless. ***HER*** has not had much of an impact on mainstream educational thinking, and I think a major reason for this is the fragmented nature of the alternative school movement. One of ***HER's*** founding purposes was to be a voice for alternative education, a bridge between humanistic/progressive educators and the entrenched

education establishment. As long as the alternative voices are scattered and at odds with each other, the mainstream does not need to take us seriously. Public education has enough problems without having to deal with a contentious, defensive, ragtag band of rebels! Instead of presenting a comprehensive alternative philosophy that draws on the strengths of Montessori, of Waldorf, of Dewey, of free schoolers and unschoolers - instead of a comprehensive and coherent philosophy, an interested mainstream educator will find a cacophony of voices, each claiming to have The Answer to the problems of education. ***HER*** has tried to present a coherent philosophy, but this looks rather silly if no one contributes to the dialogue that must support it.

The stakes are high. Education is going to have to change to meet the radically different needs of the post-industrial age. But will the new education serve the needs of multinational Corporations or the needs of human development? The answer is a foregone conclusion - unless we add our united voice to the debate.

Ron Miller, editor of *Holistic Education Review*, had an article on the history of alternative education in America in one of the early issues of ΣΚΟΛΕ, and is a long-time supporter of alternative education.

The following article, reprinted from the *Journal of Orgonomy*, is one of a whole series on the topic of "work democracy." Reich is offering us a possible blueprint of how we might actually bring about the world we are hoping for - at least, on a small scale - through our ways of relating through work. The rest of the world, he says, is pretty impervious to change in any case, because of character structure. I am inclined to agree with him. It's back to Pogo time - "We have met the enemy and he is US." (See article of that name on page 39.

History of Orgonomy
Further Problems of Work Democracy

CAN PEOPLE BE TRUSTED?
by Wilhelm Reich, M.D.

No! They are small children, rude strut-abouts, angry and jealous - easy prey to any demagogue. So when is work democracy feasible? How can social order exist if "no one keeps people in check?" Work democracy is possible insofar as people operate not from ideologies but through their work function. This is what differentiates work democracy from any other political system hitherto attempted. Life-necessary work has its own logic and effect on people. It is not to be confused with occupational therapy which tries to rehabilitate a mentally ill carpenter or a jailed railroad worker through tasks like gardening or assembling cardboard boxes. Vitally necessary work has deep biological roots and provides the optimum basis for natural self-determination. Work democracy implies the

room to work and the means of expressing both an interest in work and the will to work. Essentially it is the very antithesis of such current phenomena as the war industry, for example. It is the opposite of compulsory work.

True, man's character structure [of today] is defective, petty, cowardly, distrustful, uninvolved - that is, deteriorated to the status of a slave. As work-democratic organization progresses, the existence of this human sickness will become amply clear. We never maintained that work democracy alone could accomplish the much-needed restructuring of people from slaves and idle talkers to responsible pillars of society. It only affords the economic framework within which the educational and social hygiene work of managers, physicians, kindergarten teachers, writers, etc., can unfold. The formal organization of work democracy can be accomplished with great dispatch; it requires only the establishment of a direct link between itself and presently functioning work organizations plus the removal of formal authorities and their replacement by the best, wisest, and most socially oriented workers and administrators.

Human restructuring is another story. The extirpation of the emotional plague, which reached its peak in Hitlerism, will take decades to achieve and must never be compromised, interrupted, or abandoned. We

cannot have any illusion about the fact that today's living adult population is beyond any deep restructuring. It will learn to restructure and rethink as much as is feasible within the framework of being allowed to work freely and express oneself freely. But it will never cease having to do battle with strong internal resistance and to pose the usual old problems, again and again, for the coming generation. These problems will doubtless be immense and will require the full clarity of mentally sound thinking and feeling in order to avoid backsliding into Hitlerism, which will be subversive as it typically always is. Hard and relentless work with teachers and parents will be needed to make them capable of not disrupting the process of restructuring. Their having lived through Hitlerism could presumably be a very helpful lesson. One can spot this even in its minimal manifestation. The image of several thousand German boys drowning in the Skagerak can serve as a perpetual reminder. [emphasis mine, ed.]

As in the Russian revolution, there is one great danger, sure to surface, which must be overcome so that the struggle will not have been in vain. The basic reeducated sector will be small at first and will grow only slowly. The broadest sector will be locked in a

struggle between the old and the new. In this broad sector, practical authority and worker responsibility will have to triumph over the formal authority "above" and the irresponsibility "below." The strongest assurance of such victories will be simple human decency and industriousness, insofar as these natural inclinations are not stifled by authoritarian blunders or abuses. These will be no victory if we attempt to fill children and adults with academic knowledge and force-feed them political ideologies as "the best means to freedom." German scientists especially have a remarkable propensity for abstract theorizing which is unintelligible and confusing to the masses. We want to stay close to the simple wisdom of children who grasp that living is understandable in itself and needs no great elaboration of theories. The victory of work democracy can only be secured if the work organizations retrieve and revitalize human potential buried by a thousand years of slavery. Thus, the work process of adults and the educational restructuring of children will constitute the two main pillars upon which work democracy can rest and flourish. Thus, a work democratic order may transform society, and the transformed members of society could produce an essentially work-democratic society. Presently, there is no other possibility in sight to immunize people against the destructive influences of idle politicians, honorary knights, or the mystic order of the Ku Klux Klan. Massive social hygiene work

faces us - a demanding yet joyful and, finally, meaningful existence. Step by step, human society could approach the point where freedom would be more than just a phrase, where in fact, its protection as a precious commodity would be regarded as self-evident. *Freedom entails both the responsibility and the capacity for freedom* and this alone must be our starting point. Only then - when *this* kind of freedom prevails - will happiness for all mankind become a reality.

Direct Contact Between Vocational and Professional Fields

Work democracy would function poorly or founder in bureaucracy if we submitted to the activities of a motley crew of bureaucrats functioning as a central (coordinating) office. A coordinator is necessary but only for dissemination of information and maintenance of contact, and under no circumstances for conducting business. Specially schooled managers already have the responsibility of keeping all communications open, so that they can take over the economy at a moment's notice when the political bureaucracy collapses. There is no reason to maintain that society cannot function without bureaucracy. The natural relationships of the work sector exist and function without interruption; otherwise, Hitler himself could not have managed. Freed from Hitlerism, they will finally be able to achieve their goals. Capitalists will have to

adjust as best they can to giving up the profit motive and put whatever knowledge they have at the service of the organization's work function. The *work* would have to proceed with the strictest safeguards against sabotage of its function. No one would dare to confuse the ethics and humanity of a developing work democracy with the weakness and indecision of the old formal democracies. The natural function of work and knowledge as the basis of life is so all-encompassing that it takes precedence as the highest social authority. All else becomes outside and beyond human society, indefensible and disowned. *What work, love, and knowledge do not embrace is the irrational.* Even the slightest hint of chauvinism, imperialism, nationalism, antisemitism, or antisocial machinations of politicians merits severe punishment. Human work would accept everyone, regardless of what he may previously have done under the pressure of ignorance and Hitlerism. But real Hitlerism, for example, the formation of gangs, defender-of-the-front leagues, or Wotan-Hildur Corps, has no right to exist. Even the faintest stirring of political reaction is not to be tolerated - recall how Hitler choked out every faintest trace of human decency and freedom. **For once and for all, we must learn from the experience of 1914 to 1918.** [emphasis mine, ed.]

We must emphasize that Hitlerism here refers not only to the remnants of the Hitler organizations and ideologies but also to

Stalinism with its prattling about the proletariat after invading Finland; its empty pretense to set itself up as a leader of nations or of classes on the basis of any kind of political casuistry, changeable at any time. Political chicanery of this kind is an expression of the emotional plague of this century and cannot offer any possibility for the future. *To put it simply - work, with its prerequisite, knowledge, and its goal, human happiness, will prevail* and not political "hanky-panky" or whatever one wishes to call it. Thus, the work places will function as social institutions and not as hotbeds of destruction and rebellion, the erstwhile tricks of sick party bureaucrats.

The politicians stripped the workers' strike of their social goals; they taught them to be irresponsible and so ineffectual they could only weakly threaten their brutal bosses with - "We will stop working if you don't feed us and protect us better." Such a servile attitude must give way to full responsibility for the function of the plant. Workers must no longer give in to begging their employers to feed them better in the interest of protecting political adventurers. *The right of all workers to a secure and gratifying existence is a matter of course.* Anyone who dares to dispute this is an enemy of the people. This right, however, carries with it a heavy responsibility, as well as this inescapable challenge to the workers: If we run the plants poorly and irresponsibly, we and our children

will go hungry. If we are willing to learn how to bear the responsibility ourselves, which no political party ever taught us or can teach us, business will flourish, and there will be no hoarding of profits, for which we must grovel and beg.

The main concern of the work organizations is to create all manner of social safeguards to enable today's crippled workers to rise to the highest responsibility for their own existence. The working people of all life-necessary pursuits will have to prove that they are capable of fulfilling their own vital needs and not expect gratification from any party secretary, union boss, capitalist, or national leader. Indeed, idle demagogues are well-versed in the use of words and phrases to play out their political hand. Nonetheless, there is no way out of the misery as long as the working masses - in factories, mining, transportation, laboratories, and institutions - do not refrain from behaving like little children who *beg* for freedom and bread; there is no way out as long as they fail to acknowledge their own responsibility. This strictly flies in the face of every type of party socialism, which poses as a patron and protector of the masses. It offers words and ideologies in place of rigorous education toward self-assertion and responsibility. Its officials fancied themselves the future leaders of the German revolution, without taking the slightest trouble to familiarize themselves with the essential concern and processes that constitute work. Above all, they

MR. SCHIMPF LEARNS the SECRET of LIFE...
EVERYTHING EXISTS TO ANNOY YOU
I KNEW THAT
BIL LONG

Bill Long

shied away from recognizing and eliminating catastrophic human helplessness and irresponsibility. Was it perhaps the infantile attitude of the masses on which their organization fed?

The interconnection of various industries with each other is a function of the higher technical workers themselves and not of the officials. Doctors in a hospital, for example, deal directly with the pharmacists and not with an agent. There will be no profiteers to promote bad products or bribe physicians into recommending products they do not know or reject. The departmental leader in the transportation industry will deal directly with the workers in the coal and machinery industry; the teachers with the contractors who build the schools, as well as with the authors who write the textbooks. Kindergarten teachers will not be dependent upon any board but will have to use their own ingenuity. They will deal and work directly with toy manufacturers, landscapers, makers of gymnastic equipment, etc. Young people will no longer petition bureaucrats or demonstrate for "freedom" but rather will be in direct touch with all work organizations responsible for matters dealing with youth. If they need homes, hostels, or musical, technical and hygiene skills, they will themselves deal directly with carpenters, masons, musicians, and agricultural organizations.

The film industry will no longer be governed by profit motives but by the living contact of film producers with human

existence. Thousands of film specialists eagerly await the opportunity of depicting and milking the endless sources of everyday life, as well as the broader social issues. Many an American film will serve as a model for this. Human degradation; child abuse; the misery of youth; the struggle of scientific pioneers; art and technology; scientific developments will serve as themes. Film and radio, formerly at the service of stupefying the masses, will be the most important tool for mass education. Newspapers, currently filled with horror, sensationalism, and political dirt, will serve their proper function of keeping the working masses up to date with the progress of human work. Such projects as scientific and educational expositions, the encouragement of international labor relations, serious and lively musical concerts - all can turn even the last German bigot into a human being who can grasp that the German people are neither better nor worse than the people of any other nation. The greatest emphasis will be placed on international commerce and travel in order to combat nationalistic narrow-mindedness. Remote provincial towns, whose inhabitants have never crossed local borders, must be hotbeds of the Hitler plague even though they have never heard of Hitler.

Work democracy is this and much more. There are tasks which demand liveliness, diligence, and work. If people still want freedom served to them by a fuehrer - if they refuse to fight for it

and anchor it internally and externally through responsible work democracy - this would prove them unworthy of enjoying freedom at all. They would deserve the third world war, its hundred million victims, its epidemics, its cancerous rot and impotence. If people are forced to order their lives - under the protection of society - the transformation from the slaves of today to the free men of tomorrow can unfold. Constant vigilance is needed against schemers, neurotics, old maids, moralists, politicians, and demagogues. Under stressful conditions, it is all too easy to flee into helplessness and yield to any kind of hearsay. This could lead to a revival of Hitlerism; for Hitlerism is nothing more than the helplessness and irresponsibility of the workers politically exploited by petty dictators. In the face of such a potential disaster, work democracy could supply the social setting that would render this impossible .

Reprinted from the *Journal of Orgonomy,* Winter, 1990., "History of Orgonomy - Further Problems of Work Democracy," translated by Barbara G. Koopman, M.D., and Sidney B. Heimbach, M.D., from *Weitere Probleme der Arbeits-Demokratic* Als Manuskript, Nichtim Handel, April, 1941. Durch den: Sexpol-Verlag, Europa. Politisch-psychologische Schriften, No. 5.

POGO TIME
by Mary Leue

Waiting for the glass company man to replace the left front window on my new second-hand '83 Rabbit which had fallen out on the street shortly after I bought the car and tried opening the little window for the first time, I was leafing through an old ***BH&G*** and the editorial that follows popped out at me. I copped it for ΣΚΟΛΕ! Of course it's not perfect. The magazine is heavily dependent on the business world for ads. But he does have a point, I believe, in terms a lot of us, including me, would like to ignore. And I liked the simple clarity of his perspective on the problem as one which has first to come down to each of us as part of the problem, as not islands but as "part of the Maine," to quote Donne's famous statement, and his vision of this perspective as a crucially significant preamble to anything we do in trying to solve the problem which allows us to **re-member** "for whom the bell tolls." Ed Nagel made something of the same point in the video he and his school kids made on the issue of junk mail. I bet he'd send you a copy if you sent him $25.00! It's good! It inspired me to start sending all my junk mail to a recycler!

OK - here's the purloined editorial.

WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER
by David Jordan, Editor in Chief
***Better Homes & Gardens*, Winter, 90.**

Like most of you, I'm feeling more and more outrage about what's happening to our environment. However, to be honest, I have to admit to another feeling as well — chagrin. With all my sanctimonious concern about what "they" are doing to the environment, I've been living just as high off the hog as everyone else. My cars guzzle gas, I'm never too hot or too cold for more than a couple of minutes at a time, and I throw away enough stuff every year to keep a third world family thriving.

I guess my point is this: As our concern about environmental hazards grows, we need look no farther for the cause than the face in the bathroom mirror every morning and the faces in those photos we carry in our billfolds. To quote Pogo one more time, "We have met the enemy, and he is us."

"But wait," you say, "what about Big Business? What about those oil-spilling, plastic-producing, smokestack polluters who care about nothing but their company's profits?"

Sorry, we can't shift the responsibility. We can't expect any business to voluntarily penalize itself for the sake of the environment. Competition in the marketplace will soon put that business out of business. But, as consumers, we have the power to make concern for the environment good for business. If we buy those products and services that are demonstrably safe for ourselves and safe or good for the environment, business will get the message.

Actually, I happen to know that many of the major U.S. companies are way ahead of most of us. Procter and Gamble, Rubbermaid, and GM are among those that have started extensive research on ways to make their products easier on the environment.

Our job is to be smart consumers. We can't afford to be

to be ill-informed_____or hysterical about environmental "WE HAVE MET issues. Goodness knows, these THE ENEMY issues can be confusing and the AND HE IS US." conflicting claims can inflame _____emotions. But we owe it to ourselves to get the best information and act on it responsibly. And that's where I want *Better Homes and Gardens* to come into the picture. Over the years, you've come to trust us on matters having to do with your home and family. Now, with our monthly "Our Environment" articles, we want to become your source for the best and most trusted advice. We'll tell you how to protect yourself and your family from environmental hazards, along with steps you can take to help with environmental problems. You'll find a test on page 19 this month. *[Sorry , I didn't cop this part! Ed.]* Use it to help judge how your family is affecting the world around you. The questions will also suggest some directions for improvement. I won't tell you my score, but I will tell you that I've vowed to do a lot better, starting right now. I hope you'll feel the same way, because we're sure all in it together.

It strikes me that Ron Miller's and Wilhelm Reich's articles, although totally different in style, focus and idiom of explanation, have something profound in common. I hope I can put it into words that help, and don't hinder, the process of struggle we are all undergoing to understand and accept ourselves and our world in terms that will facilitate our common humanity rather than divide us - and so, become a support to both the Source - God, the Great Spirit, the Tao, the Universe or Reality - and to the planet and its inhabitants - animal, vegetable and mineral.

What I see in both writers is a profound passion for the enormous task of expressing a vision, a perspective, on our human task which will allow us all to join in the work. But in the fleshing out of that common vision, there may be a significant difference in breadth of understanding of what it may really take to accomplish this task, an understanding which takes into account our common human - not just "divine" - nature. I could be wrong.

Like Jung, Reich was profoundly aware, as a superb therapist and profound observer of the human condition throughout his life, of the need to work within the context - and in terms of the stringencies - of what Reich called the "resistance" and Jung referred to as the "complex."

Ron expresses his vision through his chosen vehicle, ***IIER***, the acronym for which is pretty clearly a metaphor for his vision of planetary holism as a manifestation of the Godhead which includes the feminine - and in this respect, he could be called a Jungian. Reich strikes me as far less aware of the yin-yang nature of the Tao than either Jung or Ron. In failing to make allowances for the ubiquitous existence of the "complex," however, of which Reich and Jung are both so profoundly aware, Ron may be manifesting a significant gap in his understanding, it seems to me, perhaps most crucially as it pertains to his view of himself as *participant* in the problem he is expressing so eloquently and persuasively. Pogo

time!

Reich's metaphor expresses itself in more managerial, more problem-solving, terms in the classical male mode, perhaps, combining his fundamental grasp of the human condition as it develops throughout the life-span of the individual and as it is reflected in his cultural institutions. He pursues persuasively practical analyses of the problems which are the consequence of this cultural process and outlines a blueprint for correcting its ills, while taking into account the enormous difficulties posed by what he calls "the emotional plague," a vivid term which highlights both the lethal nature of the problem and its contagion! I am fortunate enough to have had a glimpse of Ron's upcoming book on the same subject which embodies superbly well *his* analysis and proposed solutions to our institutional problems - and in some ways, his analysis is superior to Reich's, in my estimation. But then, we*all* understand things better than Reich did - and that is at least partly because we all stand on his shoulders!

Reich too, I believe, being a child of his time, albeit a giant and an amazing visionary, suffered from "Pogo time" blindness - *hybris* - like the rest of us, in one respect. Like all visionaries, he tended to mistake his own brilliance for God's perspective. We all love to play God, and we all tend to confuse what is really an image

HERE'S LOOKIN'

AT YOU, KID !

LOVE,

GOD

- an idol* - for God! And then begin to identify our vision with our very survival, and to worship that image we have created as though it *were* God, and ultimately, to defend it against all comers! Can we begin to open at least one eye and allow ourselves to see God in the eye of our "antagonist?" - as well as in our own? For, in truth we are *all* God. It's far too easy to ignore the fact that we are each holograms of the Whole. One might say, we are holographic patches on God's tallis! God suffers when we forget this fact, because in truth, we are all in this together! God the Father, God the Mother, God the human being (the son/daughter), God the "I" (eye) of me. Not just me, not just you - all of us! It's an Eye-Thou universe! Ask any post-Heisenberg, "super-string theory" fundamental physicist! The dualistic illusion has nearly done us in! We can't afford, any longer, to be the "good guys," and assign *anyone* else the role of being the "bad guy," any more! And a little possum shall lead us!

* Idol, (fr. Gr. ειδολον, eidolon) image, phantom, idol, fr. ειδοσ, eidos, that which is seen, form, shape; akin to Gr. (ιδειν, idein) to see. 1. An image or representation of a deity, made or used as an object of worship; in Scriptural language, a false god, a heathen deity...4. An object of passionate devotion.

The Yellow Picture
(Author Unknown)

He always wanted to explain things.
But no one cared.
So he drew.
Sometimes he would draw and it wasn't anything.
He wanted to carve it in stone or write it in the sky.
He would be out in the grass and look up in the sky.
And it would be only him and the sun and the things inside him that needed saying.
And it was after that he drew the picture.
It was a beautiful picture.
He kept it under his pillow and would let no one see it.
And he would look at it every night and think about it.
And when it was dark, and his eyes were closed, he could still see it .
And it was all of him.
And he loved it.
When he started school he brought it with him .
Not to show anyone, but just to have with him like a friend.
It was funny about school .
He sat in a square, brown desk
Like all the other square, brown desks
And he thought it should be red
And his room was a square brown room.
Like all the other rooms .
And it was tight and close.

And stiff.
He hated to hold the pencil and chalk,
With his arm stiff and his feet flat on the floor,
Stiff,
With the teacher watching and watching.
The teacher came and spoke to him.
She told him to wear a tie like all the other boys.
He said he didn't like them .
And she said it didn't matter!
After that they drew.
And he drew all yellow and it was the way he felt about morning.
And it was beautiful.
The teacher came and smiled at him.
'What's this?' she said. 'Why don't you draw like Ken's drawing?
Isn't that beautiful?'
After that his mother bought him a tie.
And he always drew airplanes and rocket ships like everyone else.
And he threw the old picture away.
And when he lay alone looking at the sky,
It was big and blue and all of everything,
But he wasn't any more.
He was square inside
And brown,
And his hands were stiff.
And he was like everyone else.
And the things inside him that needed saying didn't need it any more.
It had stopped pushing.
It was crushed.

Stiff.
Like everything else.

The above poem was handed in to a teacher in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, by a Grade 12 student . Although it is not known if he actually wrote the poem himself, it is known that he committed suicide a few weeks later. The poem originally appeared in GENERATION , a Saskatchewan-based magazine.

THREE BY CHARLENE

(Charlene Liberata, The Free School,
Albany, New York)

when I sit in my heart
all of the pain
all of the fear, rage, grief
it all surrounds me
as well as the joy
it's a very clear view
of everything separate
rage from my heart feels very different
from
rage from my head
fear from my heart is mine
grief from my heart stays with me
like a sad song
rage from my heart
never tries to punish
my heart songs want to be heard
want to enkindle your heart songs
my head songs only want to drown you
out
head looks for an enemy
heart looks for a mate

late 1988

the old mysteries
linger
beloved melody
of age
going into youth
and newer songs
newer dances
move

bringing the grace
of past virtuosity
into this novicity
is wearing the dress of the adept
into the kindergarten
it takes courage
and the wisdom of humor

for what are the robes of experience
if not the nakedness of imminent rebirth
the opportunity to start
again
like spring
from love
with joy

not naked now
but dressed
in the finery
of the heart
that is the ally
of the rich

fall 1988

I went into this section of my life
blinder
than I have ever been before
dumber and deafer too
I am amazed that I am
still
here
I have never begun
with more naiveté
less protection

martyrdom is a powerful shield
it made me angry
to set it
down
but I had to
I felt more of a target

without it

anger is a powerful shield
it made me feel helpless
to set it down
but I had to
I felt less isolated
without it

helplessness is a powerful shield
it made me feel fearful
to set it down
but I had to
I felt less dependent
without it

fearfulness is a powerful shield
it made me feel embarrassed
to set it down
but I had to
I felt less inferior
without it

embarrassment is a powerful shield
it made me feel honest
to set it down

but I had to
I felt more relaxed
without it

honesty is a powerful shield
it makes me feel martyred to
set it down.

MATTERS OF FACT:
Keeping the Planet Cool
from *Calypso Log,* April 1990

Imagine in some far corner of the universe a band of interplanetary terrorists plotting revenge against Earth. Marvel at their plan—to alter Earth's climate, make the planet unlivable—but ever so slowly, enjoying the spectacle of billions of Earthlings struggling over centuries to rescue themselves from encroaching seas, parched fields and unbreathable air. Science fiction, you say? Think again. This unspeakable act has already begun, but it is not the work of alien terrorists. It comes from the everyday activities of people.

Before it is too late, we need to understand certain facts about the global climate machine. First, if Earth absorbed all the radiation it receives from the sun, life would be impossible. Second, keeping Earth cool depends on a complex heat exchange involving air, water and ice—primarily Antarctica's ice. "Antarctica is the strongest forcing center and heat sink for the global atmosphere; it's the cooling center for the planet," says Dr. Joseph Fletcher, Director of the Environmental Research Laboratories at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Boulder, Colorado.

Earth continuously receives radiation from the sun, part of

which is absorbed, either by the land and oceans or by the atmosphere. The rest is radiated back into space. Tropical regions receive and absorb the greatest amount of heat. The polar regions receive and absorb the least. Most of Earth's landmasses absorb more heat than they reflect, but the poles do exactly the opposite. Because of the reflective power of ice, both the Arctic and the Antarctic radiate more solar energy into space than they receive, but the North Pole is beginning to warm. Some of Greenland's ice streams are surging as much as four miles a year.

The planet's greatest source of cold is Antarctica. As such, it functions like a natural air-conditioner. Because of its unique geography and the surrounding Southern Ocean which feeds into Earth's three major ocean basins (Atlantic, Indian and Pacific), Antarctica circulates its cold to the world's oceans as it has been doing for the past 20 to 25 million years. At the same time, the Southern Ocean effectively isolates Antarctica from the warm surface waters of the subtropics, allowing the build-up of the great ice cap that covers the continent.

"The amount of ice on Antarctica doesn't really change," says climatologist Dr. Steven Warren of the University of Washington, explaining that the new amount of ice that forms each year is balanced by the loss from ice flow into the ocean.

The Global Climate Machine

In the planetary climate, the movements of air and water masses are complex and intimately linked. Ice, too, plays a crucial role. Like the ocean and the atmosphere, ice is a dynamic system but is the least well understood. This poses a critical problem for computer-simulation models because ice can influence climate independently of the oceanic and atmospheric systems.

Oceans, atmosphere and ice all interact in the first part of the global climate's thermal cycle. This involves the transport of heat from the tropics to the South Pole. The heat absorbed in the tropics warms a great mass of water up to 10,000 feet deep. This mass of deep water flows slowly southward. Nearing the Southern Ocean, it rises steadily, reaching the surface close to Antarctica; then it releases its heat into the glacial-atmosphere of the South Pole.

By the time this water reaches Antarctica, it is not what we would call warm; its temperature is only two degrees Centigrade higher than that of the surrounding water, but the rising of water takes place on such a grand scale that the quantity of heat drained off is enormous. At the periphery of the continent, water arrives on the surface at an estimated 1,000 million cubic feet per second, or 220 times the flow of the Amazon.

The second part of the thermal cycle involves the export of cold water by the Southern Ocean. The Antarctic Zone, the region

between the Antarctic polar front and Antarctica's continental margins, is of special importance for the global climate. "It's in that region that much of the cold waters of the world ocean form," explains Dr. Arnold Gordon, Professor of Oceanography at Columbia University and member of the senior research staff at Lamont Doherty Geological Observatory in New York. "The water masses that are exposed to the Antarctic atmosphere become very cold and dense, and they sink to the deep ocean floor," says Gordon. From there, Antarctic Bottom Water spreads into the rest of the world ocean.

"About 60% of the volume of the world ocean gets its characteristics from Antarctic Bottom Water," says Gordon. After forming in the western part of the Weddell Sea, this cold water moves northward against the continental margins of the east coast of the Antarctic Peninsula, forming what oceanographers call the Western Boundary Current. This current carries Antarctic Bottom Water to the tip of the Antarctic Peninsula. From there it flows into the open ocean and is transported by the Circumpolar Current around Antarctica and ultimately northward into the global ocean below the thermocline—the layer of water relatively near the surface where the greatest temperature change occurs.

Gordon points out that the average temperature of the world ocean is now slightly below 3°C. "The reason it's so low is because

of the chilling effect of the Antarctic Bottom Water," he says, adding that the dense, cold water also puts oxygen into the deep ocean below, 62 miles in depth. "Think of it as aerating or ventilating the deep ocean."

It is through ventilation that the ocean is coupled with the atmosphere. "This vertical overturning in the Antarctic is essential in determining the overall climate of the globe," says Gordon. "If you stop producing Antarctic Bottom Water, the average temperature of the world ocean would warm, and that actually could change the entire circulation and structure of the ocean and certainly have some strong effects on the carbon dioxide and the greenhouse gases, too." Fortunately, there are no signs that the production of Antarctic Bottom Water will cease, but scientists from all over the world are concerned about the effect global warming could have on the Antarctic system and how that could, in turn, affect global climate.

Right now, says Gordon, "As far as the Antarctic is concerned—in the ocean, the sea ice, the glacial ice, and the air temperature—there is no clear sign of any global warming; yet that's the place we would expect to see it first." Gordon points out, however, that he and most of his colleagues would agree that there will be greenhouse warming. It is the rate of the warming—whether it will happen in decades or centuries—that is in question. "I would give top priority to learn what that rate is," he emphasizes.

The stakes are unimaginably high. Climatologists, oceanographers and glaciologists are racing against a global clock, trying to learn enough about the vast climate system to refine the models used to predict future options. Current predictions are no more than educated guesses, but there are holes in the knowledge base used to design the models: ice dynamics are not well known, the crossover point between precipitation and melting rates over Antarctica is not known; the effects of the elevation of the ice sheet and the changing albedo from sea ice to land ice are not known. And then there are clouds. Clouds are quite changeable, yet they reflect half of all the solar energy from Earth into space. (Earth, as a whole, reflects about 30% of the energy it receives from the sun back into space. Clouds are responsible for reflecting half of this amount.) With respect to Antarctica's crucial role in the global climate machine and the possible scenarios as global warming increases, scientists are addressing an agenda of unknowns. The questions to be answered are many, the complexity staggering, the implications for life on Earth deadly serious. We do not have to worry about alien terrorists tampering with the global climate. We only have to worry about ourselves.

By Mary Batten and Veronique Sarano-Simon, reprinted from *Calypso Log* , April 1990.

THE "COUNCIL OF ALL BEINGS"

JOANNA MACY

from *Fellowship in Prayer (FiP), February, 1990.*

In September of this year, FiP will sponsor a Worldwide Day of Prayer and Meditation to Help Heal Mother Earth. No one is better qualified than Joanna Macy to speak out on the desperate plight of the life forms dying all over our planet from toxic waste, pesticides and pollution of all kinds. Here she describes a liturgy in which God's wounded creatures speak about their suffering and implore men and women to restore the earth to its divine wholeness before it is too late. The ritual has been enacted in the USA, Canada, and Europe since 1985.

Listen, humans, this is our world. For hundreds of millions of years we have been evolving our ways, rich in our own wisdom. Now, our days are coming to a close because of what you are doing. It is time for you to hear us.

I am lichen. I turn rock into soil. I've worked as the glaciers retreated, as other life forms came and went. I thought nothing could stop me . . . until now. Now I am being poisoned by acid rain.

Your pesticides are in me now. The eggshells are so fragile they break under my weight, break before my young are ready to hatch.

Listen, human, I am raccoon, I speak for the raccoon people. See my hand? It is like yours. On the soft ground you see its imprint, know I've been there. What marks on this world are you leaving behind you?

The people seated in a circle are speaking extemporaneously. Stepping aside from their identification as humans, they are letting

themselves be spokespersons for other life forms. They are meeting in the Council of All Beings.

This simple ritual form in which these people meet first took place when I was in Australia in 1985 and in the intervening years has spread to the United States, Canada, and Europe. In response to the accelerating ecological disasters of our time, it gives form to both anguish and hope. Simultaneously solemn and playful, it allows us to honor our pain for the world and our interconnectedness with all life—a sacred interconnectedness that steadies the heart and empowers subsequent actions in defense of Earth.

The Council of All Beings has been held in a wide variety of settings indoors and out, from the Grand Canyon to a college student lounge, from a grove of towering redwoods to a midwestern police armory, from a school gymnasium to a church sanctuary. With Matthew Fox, we have incorporated it into the celebration of the Mass as part of the Liturgy of the Word. Numbers of participants have ranged from a dozen to more than a hundred and included people of all ages. Intergenerational Councils are particularly rewarding.

We begin by allowing ourselves to be chosen by another life form, on whose behalf we will speak in the Council of All Beings. Countless are the species who co-exist with us in the web of life, deeply affected by current developments, yet without a voice in the

deliberations of humankind. When meeting outdoors in nature, people can go off alone to find the identity they will assume; when indoors, some moments of silence suffice as people relax, sometimes lying down, to wait with open, nondiscursive mind the presence of another life form. It is wise to stay with the first impulse that arises, for it is not a question of choosing a species one knows a lot about, but rather allowing oneself to be surprised— whether by plant or animal or ecological feature such as a mountain, swamp, or a body of water.

We take time to see this life form in our mind's eye, carefully and from every angle, and to enter it, imaginatively sensing its body from within, and to ask its permission to speak for it in the Council.

When time permits and supplies are at hand, we make simple masks or breastplates to portray our adopted identity. We do this in companionable silence to sounds of nature, actual or taped. Also when time permits, we cluster in small groups of three or four to practice speaking for our life form, putting into human speech how it feels to be hawk or river, otter or willow. This helps stretch and sharpen our imaginative awareness, further dislodging us from the usual human roles we play

Now the creatures gather in a circle and the Council of All Beings formally commences. Prayers and invocations help create a

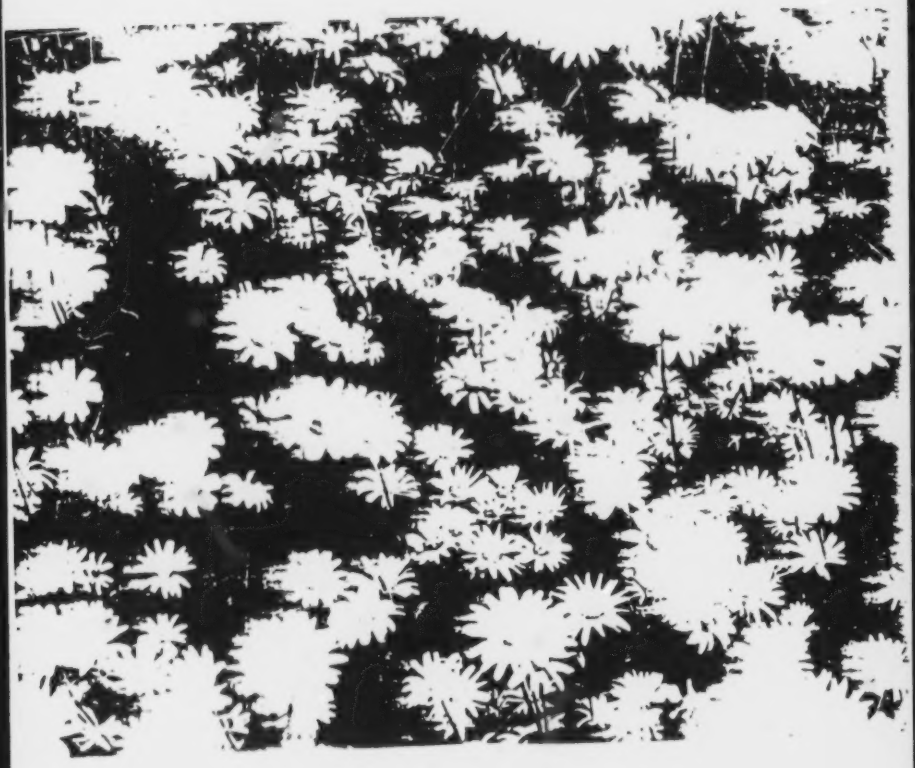
sacred space. Native American elements, such as smudging with sage or cedar and calling on the Four Directions, are appropriate. After each corner to the Council identifies himself or herself in turn

("Wolf is here, I speak for all wolves."
"The Nile is here, I speak for all rivers."),

the ritual leader opens the proceedings. "We meet in Council because our planet is in trouble. It is fitting now, and it is important, that each of us be heard. For there is much now which needs to be said and much that needs to be heard." He or she invites the beings to speak spontaneously, and they do. There is much that wolf and Nile, hawk and lichen, have to say.

Soon it is evident that humans should be present to hear and they are invited to come into the center of the circle to listen in silence. This means that participants in the ritual, five or six at a time, put aside their masks and move into the center to sit back to back facing outwards; and the Council continues with the manifold life forms addressing the humans—and the humans, for once, being quiet. Periodically, say every ten minutes or so, the ritual leader beats a drum to signal that the humans can return to take up their adopted identities in the wider circle and others replace them in the center. This enables everyone to participate both as human and nonhuman.

The testimony of the beings is often almost overwhelming;



with eversurprising poignancy and eloquence they report how rapidly and radically humans are affecting their lives and their chances of survival. In every Council there comes a shift when complaint and accusation give way; a turning occurs, a recognition of solidarity. Realizing that the fate of the earth depends now on human decisions, the beings in the Council rally to find ways to strengthen humans. The ritual leader can cue this shift:

"Many humans know now that their ways are destroying the earth. They feel overwhelmed by what they have unleashed. Yet our fate is in their hands. O fellow-beings, what powers of ours can we share with them, what strengths of ours can we give?"

No other announcement is usually necessary for the beings in the Council to respond spontaneously.

I, lichen, work slowly, very slowly. Time is my friend. This is what I give you: patience for the long haul and perseverance.

By offering them, naming them, the participants in the ritual invoke the powers within themselves that they want strengthened. The powers are available to us all because they in here in the web of life and because, in the final analysis, that web is what we are. We draw upon them now in this time of great peril and great promise.

It is a dark time. As deep-diving trout I offer you my fearlessness of the dark.

I, lion, give you my roar, the voice to speak and be heard.

I am caterpillar. The leaves I eat taste bitter now. But dimly I sense a great change coming. What I offer you, humans, is my willingness to dissolve and transform. I do that without knowing what the end result will be. So I share with you my courage too.

MAIL TO: Fellowship in Prayer, **291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542, (609) 924-6863.**

FiP defines itself in the following words (quoted from the flyleaf):

Since 1949 the purpose of *Fellowship in Prayer* has been to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

For a number of years, **Joanna Macy** has been giving voice to the perspective of the Earth as our home, our Matrix. Joanna's earth ritual will appear in expanded length in her new book, ***Thinking Like a Mountain: Toward a Council of All Beings*** (written with John Seed, Pat Fleming, and Anne Naess), New Society Publishers.

THE SCHOOL OF LIVING
by Jerry Mintz

Not many people have heard of the School of Living, yet it has been the parent of many significant movements . It is decentralist in philosophy, and has been low profile during its 88-year history. Nevertheless, spinoffs from this group have been prime movers in the health food, organic farming, land trust, alternative education, intentional communities, and environmental protection movements.

Its current mailing address is in Cochranville, Pennsylvania, although its "administration" and governing committees are spread out over several states. In Cochranville lives one of the co-editors of its pioneering publication, *The Green Revolution*. Her name is Ginny Green, and she lives on one of several pieces of land that is held in trust by the School of Living. Tom Greco is the other co-editor, and current President of the Board.

Ralph Bersodi, the originator of the idea of land trusts, was also the founder of the School of Living. In addition, he is also credited by some as being the father of consumer protection, having published his book, *The Advertising Age*, in 1925. The School of Living is also credited with being one of the first proponents of the back to the earth movement and environmentalism in general, which has led to the creation of the newer concepts of bioregionalism and

permaculture.

The School of Living is deliberately devised to be decentralized. Its various committees have almost complete autonomy and new committees keep forming. For example: the recently formed committee on permaculture is an approach to environmental protection which has an eye to the long term needs of man to survive on this planet; Bersodi was an early experimenter in commodity based currency, which has led to current work on alternative currencies. The newly revitalized educational committee in now involved with documenting, coordinating, and promoting new and dramatic changes that are taking place in alternative education, in public and independent community schools, home education, and life-long learning.

Perhaps it is this decentralized and empowering approach which has enabled the school of living to spawn so many significant and relevant movements, while taking very little credit.

At a recent board meeting at an intentional community in Virginia, they decided that it was time to call more attention to the accomplishments of the School of Living, as it prepares its agenda for the seventh decade during which it has existed, the 90's. People who have followed the work of the School of Living have said, "If you want to know what the important new movements will be thirty years from now, ask what the School of Living is saying today.

The Singing Sword: Images Guide Adolescents' Journeys by Pythia Peay

While at Yale University's Divinity School during the early seventies, David Oldfield took a year off to work with emotionally disturbed boys at a Connecticut residential treatment center. Trained in the language of spiritual metaphors he found himself at a loss teaching adolescents who defended themselves with psychiatric terminology. "At the end of a class I would assign homework," recalls Oldfield. "A 13 year-old boy would raise his hand and say, 'You can't give me homework! Didn't my doctor tell you I perseverate under stress?' I didn't even know how to spell perseverate, and here's this kid using it as a way of stopping himself from growing."

Oldfield decided he needed to find a common language. At the time he was involved with a small experiential theater group and deeply immersed in looking at the roles of fantasy and festivity in modern life. "The story line in America then was all about transformation," he explains. "What we were moving away from we were clear about, but what we were moving toward nobody knew. The vehicle we used was the mythical image of the Fool, standing on the edge of a cliff looking out into the unknown."

Taking a leap of his own into the unknown, Oldfield began

incorporating fantasy and imagination into his work at the treatment center. With these new tools he transformed case histories into personal mythologies and adolescents into story tellers who were able to imagine themselves out of seemingly insurmountable personal crises. "The process back then became one of how to help each other tell our stories in a way that was instructive and that would allow our stories to deepen themselves so that meaning could be found in the mess of our lives. The story itself guided us out of whatever mess we were in," says Oldfield.

For Oldfield this period became the pivotal chapter in his own life story. After receiving his Master's degree in special education Oldfield moved to Washington, D. C. and began working with hospitalized adolescents at the Psychiatric Institute Foundation where he is now director of the Midway Center for Creative Imagination.

He taught history and English and started offering guided imagery groups to adolescents in his spare time. Inspired by the idea that mythology was the psychology of antiquity, Oldfield brought together mythological themes with issues the teenagers were working on in their treatment. They would travel on time winds or descend into an underworld where they met beasts and monsters and learned to deal with them, sometimes by fighting or tricking them, or by making peace with them The central purpose of these journeys

was to create a protected space where the teenagers could experience their own inner images. The adolescents were energized by the process; kids who were so depressed they couldn't talk in group therapy were suddenly writing volumes about a myth they felt they were having.

Oldfield became excited as he saw a deep healing taking place. The primal language of the imagination addressed and helped resolve emotional issues without labeling them "manic depression" or "schizophrenic disorders."

Over the course of fifteen years of intensive clinical work with hospitalized adolescents, of listening to young people, parents, social workers and psychiatrists, Oldfield distilled these guided imagery journeys into a more formal shape: the Journey, a 40-hour program devised as a modern rite of passage for adolescents. "I feel that it's a huge sin of our generation that we have not clarified for ourselves what it means to move into adulthood," says Oldfield vehemently. "Ancient cultures realized what we do not: that the turbulence of adolescence bursts open the doors to the inner world. Recognizing this, the Journey creates a safe container where adolescents can chart the rich domains of their unique inner worlds."

The Journey as Initiation

For Oldfield the classic hero's tale—Theseus braving the

minotaur in the depths of the labyrinth or Luke Skywalker battling Darth Vader—best expresses the adolescent spirit. Thus inspired by Joseph Campbell's classic, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* , Oldfield based the Journey on Campbell's distillation of heroic myths from around the world as laid out in five stages.

The Journey takes roughly 40 hours (although the process is designed to be flexible enough to fit into the schedules of varying institutions) and is facilitated by a person who functions as a Guide, a position similar to that of the elders in ancient rites of passage. Guides do little personal interpretation. Their responsibility is to create the occasion and atmosphere within which the growth process can occur. Students are given illustrated workbooks to keep a running log of their experiences and to record the thoughts they have and the drawings they create in response to guided imagery sessions. The latter are recorded on five audio cassettes and contain relaxation exercises for the symbolic journey and invitations to write and draw in the notebooks.

Before embarking on the first stage of the Journey participants declare a code of honor: No criticism, judgment or analysis of anyone's work, including one's own, is allowed. Then, as they leave the known for the unknown, the adolescents draw a map of their past, synthesizing and placing in context all the important events in their life. These are represented symbolically, as

in the map of one participant who drew his middle school years as "The Garden of the Maze of Confusion" because he felt he was always moving without knowing where he was going

The first stage of the Journey, the "Call to Adventure," occurs when the hero leaves the comfort of the status quo. Calls to adventure are usually negative, says Oldfield, because the status quo has become sterile. For example, the Fisher King in the Grail legend gets a wound in his side that won't stop bleeding. As long as his wound bleeds, the land remains barren. This is exactly what adolescence is all about: the territory of childhood no longer allows the teenager to grow.

When the would-be hero leaves the world of the familiar and enters the unknown, he or she cannot go back to childhood. Although many events in a young adolescent's life correspond to crossing this threshold, often the irrevocable steps relate to exploring the world sexually for the first time.

Oldfield stresses that the Journey does not advocate sexual promiscuity for adolescents. What it does do is suggest that teenagers learn to get in touch with and love their bodies. In ancient rites, adolescents were taught to rejoice in the power and ecstasy of their bodies. Oldfield believes that adolescents can begin to experience the wonder of puberty, to learn what is happening to their bodies and to link their genitals with their hearts. If, as a

society, we are not actively engaged in the spiritual dimension of love and the joys of sexuality, then teenagers are left only with the physical high, explains Oldfield. We need to wake up, he says, and address this very powerful part of the human spirit.

In "Finding One's Path," the second major phase of the Journey, adolescents seek the paths they will walk through life. In ancient rites this corresponded to the stage when adolescents were sent into the wilderness to fast and be still until they received a vision. These visions established the fact that each person has something special to offer the tribe.

"Developmentally," says Oldfield, "this is the time when kids really need to be needed. Our culture says wait until you graduate from graduate school and then you can make your mark. Well, they need to do that now! They need to start seeing that they are necessary to the workings of this world."

Once adolescents have found their paths, their ability to walk them is tested in the third phase of the Journey, "The Heart of the Labyrinth." "Finding one's own path takes great courage. It requires strength to stand for one's own convictions, listen to one's own wisdom, set one's own goals. It means moving ahead in life without a map, facing the twists and turns, the dead ends and crossroads, armed only with an internal compass," writes Oldfield in the companion book to the program. "The price is high, but the failure

to walk one's own path is higher still. "

Before entering the labyrinth, kids are taught coping skills to face the dangers they will meet. While in ancient times those threats were primarily external, these days the threats are mostly internal: feelings of guilt or failure, anger or a negative self-image. At this point in the Journey Oldfield uses a lot of improvisational games for emotional growth. In "How Angry Can You Get?" a director sets a scene involving conflict between two people and instructs participants to raise and lower their anger. The point is to discover how to express anger most effectively.

But the most cathartic event in the road of trials and obstacles is confrontation with death. In rites of passage, the image was literal: adults would place adolescents in a grave-like pit and pour goat's blood on top of them. The adults would then walk around the pit talking about the children in the past tense, as though they didn't exist anymore. In heroic literature, the hero's ego is mortified in order for him to better serve a higher purpose.

For adolescents, these mythological images translate readily. The mortification of their ballooning egos can occur when they don't make the football team or they're not invited to the high school dance. The danger, says Oldfield, comes because we give adolescents no context for understanding their suffering at these moments. "We've given them no context for saying 'Aha! You've

reached the time where you're being mortified. Let me tell you the story about the time that happened to me.' They need an historical point of view so they can understand in their hearts that this happens to everybody ." The separation that occurs when they lose a girl friend, the disintegration that occurs physically as their bodies change, and the times when they have acne at the very moment they want to have pure skin: These are adolescent death experiences, according to Oldfield. Because we as a society tend to avoid death and suffering in all its guises, we do little to help them understand the complex and overwhelming emotions that accompany this stage. "We need to do a lot of educating around death imagery," says Oldfield with concern. "Our kids are just way too upset about death and dying these days. They need to learn the difference between symbolic and literal death, because getting the two confused is what sometimes leads to suicide."

One girl's confrontation with death is a good example. "She drew herself facing death, who is portrayed as a Cyclops," Oldfield reports. Because the monster is so threatening, she thinks they must fight, so she pulls out the sword she's been carrying on her journey. As she pulls it out, the sword begins to glow, then hum. When the sword starts humming, the beast of death starts dancing with lumbering movements. In the story that accompanied her drawing she said, "I need to learn how to dance with death."

"This is a 16-year-old girl who's discovered that the reality of death exists, but that she can't destroy it with her little sword," continues Oldfield. "But it doesn't need to destroy her either. She's come upon an incredibly powerful metaphysical truth—because isn't that what we're all learning with our lives - how to dance with the fact of our own mortality?"

In the fourth phase of the Journey, "The Wood Between the Worlds," what the adolescents have learned on their inner journeys must now give meaning to concerns such as high school proms, college rejection notices and family disagreements. In ancient rites of passage this was the time when the youth was charged to find the "natural expression" of his vision, whether in the form of a song, a dance or story. For the modern initiates of the Journey program, this is the time to paint a mask. The mask is meant to reveal, through color, design, shape and texture, the adolescent's newly discovered self.

During this stage adolescents are encouraged to spend time alone so they can assimilate their powerful inner experiences. This period of solitude—with no workbooks, no guided imagery journeys, nothing to think about but what comes naturally—also serves to honor the reality of the interior world they have just encountered.

In the fifth phase, 'The Ceremony of Passage," adolescents

create a ceremony or celebration to which they invite their parents. Traditionally, this is when the youths returned to the tribe to give of their experience and signify their submission to something greater than themselves. Through storytelling, improvisations or readings, group members claim their growth, their knowledge, their new stature as adults. They also present their masks—symbols of the new people they have become—to their parents. This allows the parents to acknowledge that the person before them is no longer a powerless child.

Because parents wanted a more active role in the closing ceremony of the Journey, Oldfield recently created *The Journey*, a beautifully designed workbook in which parents recall their own experiences of growing up. This story is then presented as a gift to their child at the closing ceremony.

Back in the "Real" World

At present the Journey is being offered through the Psychiatric Institutes of America, which has about 60 hospitals around the country. For the last 18 months, Oldfield has been training therapists to use the program (currently, it is used in 14 different hospitals, from San Antonio to Florida to New Hampshire).

Oldfield does not glorify his work with adolescents, but

describes it as "frightening, awful, dirty, confusing work." "It is the sacred function of adolescence by virtue of where they are in the life cycle to demonstrate by their lives the tragic flaws of the way adults are living their lives. My sense of the tragic flaw of modern times is that because we have lost the spiritual dimension of the American myth and are transitioning into a new myth, life has become too materialistic, too oriented to the here and now. The kids of today are exposing that flaw by totally immersing themselves in the present—too much sex, too many drugs, too self-indulgent ."

It is this spiritual imbalance that Oldfield is trying to correct through his work journeying with adolescents.

Reprinted from the Network News, Winter, 1990. Pythia Peay is a freelance writer in the Washington D.C. area who specializes in cultural, psychological and spiritual issues.

CHALLENGING THE GREAT CHAIN OF EDUCATION

by Gene Lehman, editor of **LUNO**

"First link in the **CHAIN**," the lead headline of the *Gresham* [Oregon] *Outlook* Vista '90 series on education (March 3), is very suggestive. If kindergarten is the first link in the **CHAIN**, what is the last link? Is it the 12th grade, or does the **CHAIN** continue on through other institutions? Does one ever break completely free from the **CHAIN** that binds at such an early age?

If a **CHAIN** is no stronger than its weakest link, could it be that the further the **CHAIN** is extended, the harder it is to maintain high quality? Though one of our most popular national pastimes is blaming schools for all the ills of society, the real problem may not be that schools are failing but that they are trying to do too much and succeeding too well .

Students in kindergarten now must learn about alcohol and drugs and how to resist sex molesters. As family and community life breaks down and the school system takes the responsibility of teaching students about sex, drugs, disease and proper behavior, "teachers more and more are becoming secondary, and in some cases primary, sources of parental guidance."

According to the superintendent of the Reynolds district, Hudson Lasher, teachers are handling this role very well. "I don't

know anybody else in society who can do a better job of doing it than schools do."

Teachers play a major role in helping students develop the belief in themselves, the self-esteem so many seem to lack. Without self-esteem, "kids are easy prey to alcohol and drugs, a life of crime," says Lasher. But as teachers take over more parental responsibility, what happens to the self-esteem of parents? Is school success helping to undermine family life and family values?

Third-grade teacher Sandi Ludi thinks there's a "lack of respect for adults," and that it is growing each year. Fourth-grade teacher Marvelle Cop says, "More and more is expected of the teachers . Less is expected of the home."

Although students are taught to resist peer pressure, sixth-grade teacher Tim McDaniel says "Peer pressure is king at the middle school." Eighth-grade teacher Jim Tompkins, after 20 years at East Orient School, says, "Nowadays the kids don't know where their parents are. Or they know where they are and they can't get to them."

Gresham High School teacher Sandi Long says, "Education now is almost socialization of the student . We are not primarily just educators." With all the problems facing today's teachers and students, Long likes the challenge and says, "I really think teachers are doing a good job and students are doing a good job learning."

Within the confines of our school system, teachers and students are actually doing remarkably well. Many very capable, sensitive, dedicated teachers and many high-achieving students are challenging **CHAIN** control as they strive to do what works best for them.

Many parents are taking primary responsibility for educating their children, demanding more choice, teaching their children at home. The biggest problem is finding ways for all concerned with quality education to work together in a positive, constructive, rather than in a negative, confrontational way.

As the education **CHAIN** is challenged from within and without by responsible, creative people and by hard economic realities, **NETWORKS**, aided by all the latest communication technology, are breaking through barriers to make the best education people and resources easily accessible to all.

EX-CHAIN-GING COMMAND

Throughout the world, in traditional institutions ranging from government and military to business, religion and education, the **CHAIN OF COMMAND** is breaking up at the top, breaking down at the bottom and breaking out in the middle.

When those at the top of a **CHAIN** lose moral authority, personal power and their sense of direction, those at the bottom

become more and more desperate, hopeless and unmanageable; they lose respect for authority, law, morality, civility, community, family and themselves, as they degenerate into hopeless apathy or strike out in violent, random acts of rage.

Those in the middle of a **CHAIN**, often a majority, may struggle valiantly to preserve an orderly process, but when the mental strain and physical cost become unbearable, they break out in many directions, ranging from narrowly self-serving to fractiously futile or cooperatively constructive.

Many **CHAINS** are old and rusty with some very weak links. Many are overextended, stretched to the breaking point. Most **CHAINS** lack the flexibility to operate efficiently in a competitive situation; they develop an insensitive bureaucracy that frustrates creativity and discourages high productivity.

As those in control of a **CHAIN** feel threatened, they almost instinctively fall back on force, both physical and psychological, to maintain their power and privileged position. The use of increased force to strengthen control often results in strains that set the stage for an explosive disintegration.

CHAINS rely heavily on government protection through regulations, laws, courts, police, military and detention to keep their subjects in line, but their most critical task is to control information and education.

CHAINS profit from a government school system that forces attendance at the earliest possible age, demands public support, and regulates curriculum, procedures, personnel and facilities and controls alternative programs through a variety of bureaucratic regulations and the harsh economic reality of having to compete with a government system which has such a financial monopoly.

While the education **CHAIN** is basic to all other **CHAINS**, especially in instilling a submissive dependence on those in authority, it is beset with multiple contradictions. It promotes freedom while depending on government control; it promotes a pluralistic philosophy but still tries to control the matter and manner of education; it professes to provide equality of education but in actual practice is very discriminatory; it offers "free" education but has made the cost so prohibitive that the entire financial structure is breaking down.

CHAINS operate effectively by maintaining a narrow focus. The education **CHAIN** is strongly pulled in a narrow direction by those who see its primary role as serving the interests of the state, but pulled in diverse directions by those who think schools should be subject to the needs of students, family and community, that education should provide the widest possible personal challenge.

There is a high-tech battle between those in control of **CHAINS** and those who are determined to challenge authority and tradition. While **CHAIN** commanders try to reduce everything and everyone to neatly manageable numbers, adventuresome hackers and rebellious technocrats find computerized **CHAINS** very vulnerable to penetration and discombobulation.

CHAINS become victims of their own success as they generate conflicting ideas and produce individuals who understand the **COMMAND** structure but yearn for the freedom of unrestricted personal development and association.

Gene Lehman is an indefatigable lover of life and people who seems to enjoy equally teaching and playing with words. Among his other personal qualities is an open-hearted generosity in sharing the products of his outer and inner preoccupations and concerns. Do contact him through LUNO:

LUNO, (Learning Unlimited Network of Oregon)
c/o Gene Lehman,
31960 SE Chin St., Boring, OR 97009

I guarantee that he will respond! His words of **Gene-ius** (see? it's catching!) appear fairly regularly in these pages, because what he has to say is always so clear and so relevant. You might say, his comments hit the issues right on the *chin*. Never **boring or looney**, despite his sign-off ID. Thanks again, comrade.

CHILDREN AT RISK
by Jonathan Kozol

The problems are enormous, but solutions can be found

A litany of plague statistics documents the decimation of the spirits of poor children. The number of homeless children has increased 800 percent since 1980. For black children under six, the poverty rate has jumped to 49 percent. Infant death rates for poor children in the South Bronx of New York are four times the rate for wealthy children on the East Side of Manhattan. Black children are three times as likely to be classified "retarded" by the public schools as whites, while black teenagers read four years behind the level of white classmates.

The litany is getting tiresome because it speaks of symptoms and not causes. One set of statistics heard less often may, for this reason, be a great deal more important. It is that body of too rarely cited data which alerts us to the differences in public education funding for the children of the very rich and the very poor: differences, moreover, which have grown at an unprecedented rate in recent years.

In 1980, the wealthiest school districts in New Jersey spent $800 more per child than the poorest districts. Today they spend

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$3,000 more. In Texas, in 1978, the richest districts spent $600 more than the poor districts. Today they spend up to $5,000 more. Though affluent districts like to argue that their fiscal edge does not automatically equate with better education, the ferocity with which the fight against all equalizing efforts makes it very clear that they know well what they are getting for their money.

Given these realities, any notion that the rich and poor compete for opportunity upon a level field rings hollow indeed. The price is paid by children whom we term "at risk" but whom, in fact we *place* at risk by policies that deny them equal opportunity

In the fall of 1989, President Bush and 50 governors gathered at Monticello for an "education summit." They spoke, in the accepted jargon of the decade, of "restructuring" the public schools and they churned out documents about the need to render public education "more competitive." But the root of the problem - the growing gap in educational resources rich and poor kids receive was not addressed: not one of the 50 governors dared even once to speak of inequality or segregation.

Twenty-two years after the death of Martin Luther King, schools are more unequal and more segregated than in 1968. In every major city, underfunded all-black schools that bear his name stand in squalid mockery of his ideals.

Unequal educational provision for our children sends a

message of contempt to many poor black children, one that soon turns to self-despisal. A thousand desperate pathologies - drugs and violence and early pregnancies and headlong flights into self-ruinous behavior - are the natural results.

What can be done? In many cases, energetic individuals like Anna Dickerson of Chicago have improved their children's poverty-stricken schools. But a few inspiring success stories won't solve a systemic problem. Broader remedial and bilingual education programs can help, as can programs aimed toward increased parental involvement (if they also help parents who themselves are educationally or socially disadvantaged). Whatever the approach, for changes to be effective they must reflect a genuine commitment to provide the same level of resources to all of our children - rich and poor alike.

When such a commitment is made, "at risk" children thrive. Consider this: on any given day in Massachusetts, 200 black children from the Boston slums ride the bus to go to school in the suburban town of Lexington. They begin in kindergarten and, although they are provided with a lot of counseling, their education is the same as that which is afforded to their affluent white classmates. Virtually every non-white child bused to Lexington from Boston finishes 12 years of school and graduates; most go to four-year colleges. Low-income black children of the same abilities,

consigned to public school in Boston, have at best a 24 percent chance of the same success.

Suburban parents care about poor children. They would like to see them helped. However, they can't expect the problem to be solved by somebody else at a good safe distance. There are ways to help "at-risk" children and ultimately end the "dual society." The answers exist. They are costly, but they are also clear and in many ways self-evident.

Jonathan Kozol is the author of *Death at an Early Age, Free Schools, The Night is Dark and I Am Far From Home,* and now *Rachel and Her Children: Homeless Families in America,* winner of the Robert F. Kennedy Book Award for 1989. A review of the latter book appeared in the winter issue of ΣΚΟΛΕ.

[Reprinted from a magazine I was reading while waiting for my husband to have his glaucoma checked by the doctor. To paraphrase Robert Browning (when asked what one of his poems meant), when I tore out the page with Jonathan's marvelous article on it, both God and I knew the name of the magazine. Now only God (and Jonathan) knows.]

Noam Chomsky: Americans are "Slaves of the Wealthy"
by Joseph Mallia

Massachusetts state militia crushed Shays' Rebellion, said educator and writer Noam Chomsky, speaking at a conference at Rowe last spring.

That Rebellion, led by Daniel Shays of Pelham against the merchant class and its debtor laws, was the country's chance for a government of "artisans by artisans, farmers by farmers," said Chomsky, who has been described as the United States' leading dissident.

Since the defeat of the radical democrats' attack on the state arsenal at Springfield, Americans have remained at the mercy of business interests, Chomsky said. Americans are "slaves of the wealthy," despite the appearance of freedom, Chomsky said in one of the five three-hour discussion sessions he led during the weekend conference, attended by about 70 people from throughout the Northeast.

As a reporter, I found the conference difficult to cover. Chomsky spent most of the fifteen hours attacking newspapers, citing chapter and verse from his research on the bias, ignorance and laziness of reporters from the New York Times and other prominent news organizations.

The soft-spoken, erudite Massachusetts Institute of

Technology linguistics professor, dressed in white Converse sneakers and jeans with rolled-up cuffs, astonished his audience with the breadth and range of his attack on the media. Much of what he said drew on research he did for an upcoming book on the role of the media in protecting the interests of the wealthy.

Chomsky is written off by some critics as a marginal political thinker and an extremist. But it is not easy to dismiss him out of hand. Considered by many the world's leading linguist, his 1957 book *Syntactic Structures* arguably did for the scientific study of language what Newton's work did for mathematics and Einstein's did for physics.

In person and at times in print he is a brilliant thinker. In the recently published *Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies*, Chomsky and a co-author marshall their expertise to show how the media operate in the service of powerful institutions rather than in opposition to them," and they tear "away the shroud of propaganda that portrays the media as a servant of free speech and democracy," according to the book's publisher. Chomsky also drew material from another book he co-authored, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media.*

Reporters for the "elite media" such as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and mass-market organs like *Reader's Digest* and *TV Guide*, are largely responsible for Americans' illusion that

they participate in governing their own country, Chomsky asserted.

He said that power in the U.S. is narrowly concentrated in corporations. Despite appearances, these corporations make essential economic decisions and there is no real political competition; Democrats and Republicans are two factions of the same "business party" Chomsky said. Newspapers, television networks, and other media answer the needs of this corporate culture by strictly limiting the range of their discourse. In this they are joined by school systems and universities, Chomsky said.

Chomsky's premise is that rather than providing an independent voice or supplementing the U.S. government's system of checks and balances, the media actually "prevent thought and promote obedience."

The result is an indoctrination that is so successful it is invisible, leaving the public believing it actually runs the country, Chomsky said.

The complicity of the media doesn't mean that reporters and editors make a conscious pact with the Devil, Chomsky said. Only those with orthodox views gain decision making power; they wouldn't have made it to the top without internalizing the values of the corporate culture. "The ideological managers have to believe," he said.

American media deserve particular censure for their coverage

of foreign affairs and national security, Chomsky said. At the conference, he patiently focused on specific examples of reporter's coverage and the effects upon U.S. foreign policy, particularly in Central America and Southeast Asia.

Chomsky focused closely on the *New York Times*. Most of those who hold key positions with the Times, including top editors and foreign correspondents, are "obedient or very cynical," he said. Reporters who differ from the *Times* mold "adapt or they just don't make it." *The Times* has distorted coverage of Nicaragua, El Salvador, Palestine, Southeast Asia, and other areas, Chomsky said.

A noted media analyst said Chomsky's assertions about the media's support for corporate power - particularly in foreign affairs and national security - is essentially correct, but he misunderstands the news writing process. Chomsky "oversimplifies the mechanism by which it happens," according to Ben Bagdikian, professor at University of California at Berkeley's graduate school of journalism, who spoke in a telephone interview from Berkeley.

It's "more subtle and complicated" than Chomsky thinks, said Bagdikian. Individual reporters "can break through the curtain," he said.

By and large, the American media do not live up to their liberal reputation, Chomsky said. They are far more conservative

than the general populace, he said. While up to half of the American people believe that the government is driven by corporate interests, only a "statistically insignificant" number of journalists bring this perspective into their work, according to Chomsky.

But even with the support of the media, the corporate culture is not all-powerful, he said. There is hope for the country, said Chomsky, who called the United States the freest democracy in the world.

Things can't continue as they are for too much longer, he said. "A system driven by greed is going to self destruct. It's just a matter of time," and the U.S. has only a few decades left if things stay as they are, he said. But all the attempts to change the current political system will fail until the free-enterprise economic system is altered, he said. "Power lies in the private economy, not in the political system." The changes will require "large-scale social planning," he said.

Chomsky said Americans must build organizations to gain control of the workplace. He sees the answer to political problems in an extension of the democratic system to the economic world - a continuation of the spirit of Shays' Rebellion.

Noam Chomsky teaches linguistics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and recently published *Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies.* [From a newspaper clipping]

FEAR AND FORCE VERSUS EDUCATION, Part II
A Study of the Effects of Coercion on Learning
by Charles G. Wieder

CHAPTER 2
THE DIFFICULTY OF DEALING WITH EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS

... "[school children] do not look at school as a place of joy or pleasure. There is no exuberant enthusiasm displayed. There is no zestful approach to the school situation.

—Tenenbaum, "Uncontrolled Expressions of Children's Attitudes Towards School" 8

Children in school rarely come to know about school—particularly the school they attend, just as a fish would be the last to discover water. It is difficult for anyone to step outside of the immediately perceptible environment to gain the perspective required to adequately evaluate that environment. This is especially true in education, for it takes a wise and educated individual to view his (her) own education objectively, to appraise constructively the learning conditions, and to project alternatives.

In societies a bit more repressive than ours, individuals who are critical of the traditional patterns of learning and teaching are soon squelched or disposed of. Traditionally, societies have guarded themselves against attempts to challenge established rituals and

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patterns of belief. Tradition-oriented societies—that is, societies where events of the past are more highly valued than progress and individuality—rely on the suppression of personal aspiration and deviance. Uniformity is forcefully sought. In such societies, education is connected primarily with cultural transmission.

In slight contrast, ours is a social system that has prospered from individual inventiveness and a forward looking, rather than a traditional, frame of mind. We allegedly advocate such virtues as independence of mind, resourcefulness, and personal accomplishment. Indeed, the survival value of self-assertiveness is readily apparent in American schoolyards and cafeterias.

Yet, paradoxically, our children are educated in relatively suppressive institutions that are geared largely to perpetuate the most traditional belief patterns of the culture. If students are creative, it is often by permission only—for example, during "art-time." Students are often ostracized for their idiosyncrasies or for any demonstration of independence. If they are critical of school authorities or the rules, this too is by permission—at student council. And just as often, critical students are quieted: "Why bother?" may represent the end of students' frustrating attempts to express themselves openly and to deal directly with their own confusion.

For the most part, students are told how and when to act independently; and at times these expressed virtues of intellectual

independence are blatantly denied or contradicted. Forced sharing and forced participation, forced obedience to the teacher's authority, forced conformity to a prescribed curriculum are all common daily occurrences. Peer ridicule and teacher intimidation often confront the assertive student of independent judgment.

Are teachers to blame? Not entirely. How could anyone be expected to contend with thirty or so assertive, stubborn students? (For the solution to this dilemma, the reader will have to wait until Chapter VIII, "Implications for Education." Skipping ahead is not permitted.)

Suffice it to say that students today find themselves working within an educational belief system that is sometimes traditional, sometimes permissive, sometimes punitive, but most often inconsistent. Professed values of self-responsibility, self-determination, and self-expression are at times blatantly contradicted—in the case for example, of uniform, teacher monitored bathroom-going. But probably more devastating than the overt pressures to conform is the unanswered confusion, the boredom that must quietly be tolerated, and the absence of personal attention which gradually erode the child's spirit of inquisitiveness.

The difficulty of stepping outside of the educational system of which we are a part requires, if we are to view it critically, that we probe deeply our early school memories—the pains of boredom,

the fear of intimidation, and the frustration of futile attempts at inquiry. The negative effects of schooling are as imperceptible as the positive effects. The child's spirit of inquisitiveness erodes grudgingly and gradually. The paralysis of creativity occurs in subliminal increments. The causes, like the consequences, are the result of a small concession here and a slight confusion there.

If it is fair to say that the goal of education in our society is mastery or integration and application of knowledge, it is safe to conclude that few students are learning what schools say they are teaching. What many students are learning instead is to dislike school in general and certain subjects in particular. Many students come to disvalue education because they are not able to see its application to their lives and their aspirations. And, more pronounced today than in the past, students are expressing distrust in the cultural framework within which schools operate and those traditional values they frequently are geared to perpetuate.

CHAPTER 3
FEAR AND FORCE IN EDUCATION

Teachers have captive audiences, literally—though unfortunately, not in the educational sense. How is the coercion experienced by students and what is its effect on them?

The terms "fear" and "force" are not simple. Their complexity becomes apparent in educational as well as in psychological and moral discussions. Certain subtle distinctions are required if arguments involving these terms are to be productive.

"Fear," as a psychological state, is related to "force," where force is an external condition: one may *fear* the threat of physical *force*. For this reason, the concept of "force" will be discussed first.

There are several senses in which we refer to force and its opposite, freedom:-

1) *External physical constraints* can prevent persons from acting as they might desire. For example, given human anatomy, unaided air flight is impossible.

2) There are also *constraints that are internal.* For example, a mental disorder or a lack of information can prevent an individual from acting in a manner that depends upon possessing that mental ability or that knowledge. One will not likely pass a test one has not

prepared for; and one cannot avoid feeling chronic anxiety when faced with the prospect of first leaving home to "do one's own thing" at age thirty-eight.

3) Experiential or sensory deprivation can also limit a person's ability to function in certain ways. Here the cause of the limited access is both an internal and an external condition. Brain damage would be an example of such a restriction of a person's range of intellectual functioning due to a lack of sensory-perceptual experiences.

In *What is Learned in Schools,* Robert Dreeben identifies *external behavior determinants*(or influences) as rules, expectations, and sanctions. Personal feelings of obligation and convictions are identified as *internal behavior determinants.*

The purpose of drawing these distinctions here is to aid our discussion of the ways in which certain forms of force affect students educationally and psychologically. As a result, we will hopefully be better able to consider, for example, how "free schools" are free, and which forms of freedom are important in learning.

Human freedom is not without limits, as we have seen. Human freedom does not mean the freedom to flap our arms and fly. Nor are we free to abuse our bodies or minds with impunity. We cannot have our cake and eat it too. But none of this should

disturb us any more than being told we are human beings should disturb us. Being human means that we are limited to what human beings are capable of. Individuals should instead concern themselves with that which they are capable of as individuals, which is generally far more than they will ever develop.

Just what are the necessary limits and the proper range of freedoms that students should have in the process of their education?

A child growing up apart from any social contact, with no exposure to language or to the accumulated knowledge of such tools and inventions as crayons and microscopes is severely limited. Certain avenues of expression are not open to that child.

Under certain conditions a society can offer an individual a range of educational opportunities not otherwise available. It is also true that societies can and do sometimes impose restrictions on individuals. While some of these restrictions may be reasonable and justifiable, others may be educationally unsound as well as immoral.

To proceed further, some preliminary assumptions, regarding learning are required. We need to know, for example, how we learn and why education is important to us before we can discuss intelligently what and how our children should be taught.

In essence, education is training for survival—that is, survival in a manner befitting our species. Even minimal independent human survival involves the ability to choose correctly

between alternative courses of action, learning the likely consequences of our actions; to select and use tools, to check our decisions and evaluate our methods of decision making—to cite just a few of the requirements. Each of these operations entails a process of thought which must be developed in each one of us. Developing these capabilities requires knowledge—knowledge of particular facts, and knowledge of how our minds function.

Without developing the case in detail here, a fundamental goal of education is that students become (or remain) *free to choose intelligently* between as many productive options as possible, and are *capable of succeeding* at what they attempt.

What are the physical and intellectual-emotional preconditions for quality human survival, and what are the prerequisites for intelligent decision-making and long-range planning?

With respect to the proper range of options available to students in a school setting (or the range of a citizen's freedoms in a social context), three levels of freedom can be distinguished:

1) freedom to think;
2) freedom to express one's thoughts; and
3) freedom to act on the basis of one's judgment.

1) The *freedom to think* should be unequivocally unrestricted. Unimpeded intellectual-emotional functioning requires

complete latitude. There should be no form of external constraint on what goes on in a student's head. Insults, intimidation, ridicule, or other forms of belittling students' intellectual quests or the products of their intellectual endeavors are overt instances of such constraint. Disallowing or failing to provide opportunities for such intellectual activities—for example, discussions, instructional games, expressive art media—represents covert constraint. 9

The freedom to think and feel is the basis of all our other freedoms and cannot be restricted without serious educational consequences. The only limitations on an individual's thinking or feeling should be those resulting from such internal conditions as the lack of certain information. Though there certainly can be negative consequences resulting from ignorance, the lack of particular knowledge would normally have no long-term educational bearing, so long as the student is not actively prevented from acquiring such information. The consequences of ignorance do not affect one's educational functioning. In other words, what a person does not know will not hurt him (her). What one evades (chooses not to know), however, can be psychologically harmful. And most important to this discussion, what others do to prevent a child from knowing is educationally criminal.

2) The *freedom to express one's thoughts* should be virtually unlimited. Because the expression of ideas can have social

consequences, however, certain restrictions are in order. Whoever is allowed to express ideas in public, for example, has the power to offend or slander others. For this reason, certain social-moral restrictions would pertain to public pronouncements. One should, therefore, be free to express ideas, but not free to coerce others into listening or abiding by them: it would entail a contradiction for one person to have the right to deprive other persons of their freedoms and rights.

3) The *freedom to act on one's thoughts* has much the same need for social-moral restrictions as freedom of expression. Assuming the requisite capabilities, one should be free to act according to one's judgment within moral limits. External conditions permitting, barring injury to others, one should be a free agent.

It has been necessary to consider certain ethical assumptions here because education, in many respects, is a moral or value-laden enterprise. Moral codes are constantly operating in schools: there are certain sanctions, restrictions, and expectations—in short, a value hierarchy and a corresponding code of proper and improper behavior—far more far-reaching than those stipulated in the student and teacher dress-codes. There are sanctions on certain types of inquiry and on the manner of responding to the teacher's questions. The relationship of teacher to pupil, of curriculum to learner, of administrator to child, all imply value premises which are more or

less directly conveyed to the students. Being sent to the Principal's office, for example, usually means trouble for the student who has misbehaved: the long, lonely walk down the lifeless corridor is dreaded by all but the most hardened of "problem children." And yet, I have also known schools where the children thought of the principal as a special person, like their teacher, with whom they could share their accomplishments and display their wares.

Making a contribution to society; preparing for college; getting through the "Blue-Birds" reader by Spring break; scoring in the top twentieth percentile of the class on a standardized test; getting along with others; developing a healthy self concept; acquiring taste and cultural sensitivity—these are among the educational goals in reference to which schools measure their success and justify their existence. Each goal is also the manifestation of certain value premises. Some of these goals (and their underlying value assumptions) are related; some are incompatible; and others are mutually exclusive. In the "philosophy" (value hierarchy) of a school or school board, some of these goals will be embraced at the expense of others. The choices of which ones to subscribe to and which to discard are based, implicitly or explicitly, on educational-moral grounds. There is no getting away from it: what and how a child is educated morally affects schoolchildren and their parents.

There are important questions to ask concerning the selection

of educational goals. One is whether or not the underlying value assumptions are made known to parents and explained to the students. One might also ask if these underlying assumptions are subject to cross examination, or if they are like those held by the students and the parents. Are they even consistent with one another and with the requirements of teaching and learning?

How are we to deal with value conflicts and conflicts of interest between students and schools or between teachers and parents? In educational-social contexts, must the will of one party eventually be imposed upon that of another?

Remembering our earlier discussion of force, three sources of force affecting a child's learning can be distinguished:

1) self-imposed;
2) that resulting from natural conditions; and
3) that imposed by others.

1) Individuals can and often do impose restraints upon themselves. It may be called self-restraint or self-discipline when persons limit their own range of activity. It is also possible that a person's values conflict with one another, or that certain of them are misguided. In such cases, the values may cause frustration; or the goals they imply may turn out to be unattainable.

Nevertheless, in the case of self-imposition of restraint, the individual will eventually be able to find out his or her mistakes if

there are any, and work to correct whatever trouble they might have caused themselves. Psychologically, the individual remains in the driver's seat. That a person lacks certain information or has been mistaken should be no cause for alarm: He or she is still free to identify and evaluate his (her) mistaken assumptions and observe the consequences of his (her) actions. In this manner, a person remains in a position to begin to remedy any problematic situation resulting from such mistakes or faulty information.

2) When natural conditions present a problem, solutions lie in coming to understand those conditions by acquiring the appropriate knowledge or skill and acting accordingly. To be controlled, nature must be understood and respected. And I venture to say that each of us is capable of such understanding, given a normal, healthy mind and a bit of education.

3) Psychologically, educationally, and morally, coercion imposed by others differs from both self-imposed and natural limitations on a person's range of actions. People are responsible for their actions, notably those that may affect others. The behavior of individuals is not predetermined. Social conventions and moral codes are man-made devices that affect the lives of others. Moral codes evolve and are the result of our knowledge, and like the rest of our knowledge, they can be mistaken. Certain social sanctions may prove to be counterproductive or confusing as moral

guidelines. Historically, societies have been dead wrong about what is proper and improper social behavior. Quite typically, arbitrary and superficial patterns of conduct are established in lieu of actual moral guidelines—for example, the equation of masculinity with the suppression of emotion, school dress codes, rules of etiquette, and other ceremonies that are supposed to signify patriotism, respect, sympathy, and so forth. Taken in their context, such rituals usually represent limited knowledge of proper and improper behavior with respect to certain social situations. Awareness of the need for order precedes our understanding of the workings of social interaction and the various values it can afford us.

The way in which society—as well as an individual—views mistakes is crucial to its own survival. It is extremely important that the members of a society view its rites and rituals as somewhat transitory, serving to create a social order and an atmosphere that encourages the refinement of existing codes of conduct and the development of ones that are better.

For these reasons, it is important that such codes of conduct contain a mechanism for reappraisal and amendment. One means of facilitating such social development is by making every effort to explain clearly a prevailing moral code's underlying rationale, and by subjecting such value assumptions to critical inquiry. On a more personal level, individuals should always be able if not encouraged

to check prevailing moral precepts against their own judgment. And perhaps most important, individuals should always have the option to abstain from any social interface.

School value-systems and codes of conduct are not exempt from scrutiny by those affected. Why should students be allowed to evaluate their schools? Because such evaluation is essential to their personal commitment to what schools have to offer them.

FOOTNOTES:

8. In *Elementary School Journal*, 40 (May, 1940).

9. See Haim Ginott, *Between Parent and Child* (New York, MacMillan, 1965) for a lucid, sensitive discussion on the importance of freedom to think, feel and express emotions to the psychological development of children.

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Jean Piaget, B.F. Skinner and John Dewey:
A Study of Teaching, Learning and Schooling
by Rosalie Angela Bianchi
(Part 2 of three parts:)

Chapter II. Skinner
Part 1. Skinner's Theory of Operant Conditioning

Burris Frederick Skinner is an influential behavioral scientist. As head of the University of Illinois and full professor at Harvard University's psychology departments, Skinner, under Navy and other agency grants, extensively studied animal behavior under laboratory conditions and developed a method of shaping and controlling this behavior. Throughout his work (especially his books: *Science and Human Behavior*, 1952; *Walden Two*, 1948; *The Technology of Teaching*, 1968; and *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, 1971), Skinner was convinced that he must apply his discoveries to human behavior; indeed, this seems to have been his major concern for the past thirty years. Skinner successfully developed a rigorous scientific method in his research of animal behavior, and - as he said in *Science and Human Behavior* - "The methods of science have been enormously successful wherever they have been tried. Let us apply them to human affairs." 1.

Skinner's theory of operant conditioning was a method of controlling and shaping animal behavior which he wanted to apply

to human beings. Based on the idea that an organism will behave in a certain way provided that reinforcement follows, Skinner used operant conditioning to teach pigeons how to play pingpong, exhibit color discrimination, guide missiles to targets, and perform other behaviors coming from their natural movements.

Skinner worked with pigeons in a specialized laboratory, controlling as many aspects of their lives as possible in order to isolate certain behavior. A pigeon was put in a plain box with minimal distractions, and deprived of food; afterwards, it was fed by means of a mechanical tray which opened into the box, until it did not exhibit abnormal behavior around eating. Food could then be used as a reward or reinforcement.

Skinner chose a frequently occurring and easily observable behavior he wanted to condition from the bird's natural movements - raising its head. He began to feed the pigeon with a mechanical tray every time it raised its head to a certain level. Almost immediately, the pigeon's behavior changed; its head seldom fell below a certain level, and - eventually - it kept its head up almost all of the time.

"Operant" is Skinner's term for behavior which acts upon the environment to generate consequences. Reflex behavior, on the other hand, is connected with the organism's internal physiology; there is an external agent, called a stimulus, which controls the response. An example of this would be a light shining in an eye and

the pupil contracting.

A fear response to an enemy is also a reflex. Reflexes can be conditioned; Skinner describes a conditioned reflex as occurring when "a previously neutral stimulus acquires the power to elicit a response which was originally elicited by another stimulus." 2. Pavlov worked in this area to modify and control reflex behavior, conditioning dogs to salivate at the sound of bell rather than at the sight and smell of food.

Reflexes are mostly concerned with the organism's survival, conditioned reflexes occur when the organism adapts to the environment. A cat responding to the opening of the refrigerator door is an example of this. But there is a far more complex and flexible type of behavior with which Skinner is concerned - he called it operant behavior. Operant behavior has an effect on the surrounding world; it is not limited to an organism's internal physiology. It is this behavior which allows the organism to get its needs met in a consistent manner; 3. it is apparently active, rather than passive, behavior. The consequences of this behavior feed back into the organism, and may change the probability that the behavior will recur:

> "If a cat is placed in a box from which it can escape only by unlatching a door, it will exhibit many different kinds of behavior, some of which may be effective in opening the door. When the cat was put into the box again and again, the

behavior which led to escape tended to occur sooner and sooner until eventually escape was as simple and as quick as possible." 4.

Thorndike performed this experiment, and has said that the cat's behavior was "stamped in" because it was followed by the opening of the door. This was called learning, and behaviorists began to use learning curves to track the rate at which new behavior was acquired. The cat's behavior is an example of operant behavior. According to Skinner, many experiments of this kind which were conducted yielded more information about the animals' reactions to various situations than information on how the behavior arose.

This is not an example of operant conditioning; the operant behavior was not conditioned. The behavior of opening the door was produced by trial and error - a waste of time to Skinner, since that behavior could have been acquired much faster in operant conditioning. Skinner could also have shaped the behavior to a special way of opening the door by carefully observing the cat's behavior and reinforced the behavior he wanted.

Skinner was concerned with how operant behavior was formed, manipulating it, reinforcing it in various ways, and discovering all the possibilities for shaping it in and out of the laboratory. He said, "Reinforcing operant behavior does more than increase the frequency of response but improves the efficiency of behavior and maintains the behavior in strength long after

acquisition or frequency has ceased to be of interest." 5

Reinforcing operant behavior is a powerful means of control, which Skinner noted occurs almost constantly; the environment continuously reinforces behavior in animals and human beings. Skinner is talking about an enormous range of behavior which adapts to the environment through a feedback system of the behavior's consequences into the organism.

Human beings act upon the environment constantly, and many of our actions are reinforcing. Through operant conditioning (reinforcing operant behavior), the environment builds our basic repertoire of behavior (as Skinner built the pigeon's behavior by providing reinforcement). This repertoire is exemplified by learning to keep balance, walk, play games, handle instruments and tools, talk, write, sail boats, drive cars, etc.

Through scientific analysis and under laboratory conditions, Skinner discovered that an organism must be stimulated by the consequences of its actions if operant conditioning is to take place: in other words, reinforcement must be important to the organism. When a particular action no longer pays off, that operant behavior will gradually cease to occur; in Skinner's terms, the behavior will be extinguished. He also discovered something quite extraordinary about reinforcement: under intermittent reinforcement, operant behavior is very resistant to extinction, and the resulting behavior is

exceptionally stable.

In an experiment, pigeons were reinforced on the average of every five seconds, but intervals varied from a few seconds after behavior to a ten minute delay, and - occasionally - to just after behavior occurred. The behavior of pecking a circle was very constant under this schedule; pigeons reinforced in this way have been observed to respond for as long as fifteen hours without pausing longer than fifteen to twenty seconds between intervals. A pigeon has been known to peck a circle 10,000 times without receiving reinforcement after an intermittent reinforcement schedule.

With a schedule of steady, continuous reinforcement (one per minute), an animal will respond at a very frequent rate; if the animal is reinforced at longer intervals (every five minutes), the animal's rate of response will be much slower. It is as if the animal learns that reinforcement is not coming for five minutes, so it might as well slow down.

Fixed ratio reinforcement, which is based on a certain number of responses (not the time it takes to perform certain behaviors), generates a high rate of response. This high rate depends, however, on the number of responses needed before the reinforcement occurs. Factories where people have to do a certain amount of work within a certain time period use this in piecework pay and principle. Workers tend to perform slowly at the beginning

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and more rapidly as they near the end of the work to be completed. This higher rate of performance is usually fatiguing, and - in general - this reinforcement method results in an inefficient use of time. 6.

Intermittent reinforcement seems to be most efficient; with this type of reinforcement, the organism will stabilize its behavior at a given rate. This is why gambling is so difficult to stop, in some cases. Many of the reinforcers on which humans depend, such as affection and approval, occur intermittently. This is because people behave differently at different times and, perhaps - as Skinner said - people have found out that this type of reinforcement works.

If the schedule of reinforcement is important, so is the fact that it must stimulate the organism. According to Skinner, we don't know for sure why a reinforcer is reinforcing, except in a biological context - food, shelter, sex. 7. In other areas, we don't know whether something is reinforcing unless we know the history of reinforcement or can test it. Also, one may not be conscious of what is reinforcing for oneself; only in retrospect can one see whether behavior was the result of certain consequences.

It is not correct to say that operant reinforcement strengthens the response which precedes it; the response has already occurred and cannot be changed. What is changed is the future probability of responses in the same class. According to Skinner, it is a mistake to think that a man or woman acts out of a purpose or goal. Instead of

saying that a man acts out of knowledge of the consequences which are to follow his behavior, we simply say that he behaves because of the consequences which have followed similar behavior in the past.

Most statements about goals and purposes are interpretations; we can describe only what a man does, not why he does it. Skinner says that statements about goals and purposes are misleading: "I am looking for my glasses" is equal to "I have lost my glasses and when I have done this in the past, I have found my glasses." 8.

The aforementioned pigeon experiment is a description of the stamping-in process of operant conditioning. It is isolating and choosing a bit of behavior, observing its frequency, finding a reinforcer, reinforcing the behavior each time it occurs, and - later - reinforcing intermittently.

When complicated behavior is involved, the entire process of operant conditioning is a gradual one, as in learning to walk; at no point, says Skinner, does this kind of behavior appear full-blown in a person's repertoire. 9.

In operant conditioning behavioral changes are only gradually modified in a process similar to the molding of a piece of clay. An experimenter can start with reinforcing a series of approximations and eventually bring a rare response to a very high probability of its occurrence. In human beings, Skinner observed,

one begins with basic undifferentiated material; behavior is continually modified from this. Through reinforcement of slightly exceptional cases, a child begins to walk, talk, and exhibit the enormous repertoire of a mature adult. 10.

Skinner says that one can describe operant conditioning without any mention of stimuli. While reinforcing the pigeon's head movements, the experimenter waited for the behavior to occur naturally; he did not elicit it by the presentation of a specific stimulus. In the experiment with the cat in the box, the experimenter did nothing, aside from arranging circumstances, to bring about the behavior. It would, however, be inefficient in the control of behavior to wait for the desired response to occur before reinforcing it. In order to instill new behavior in an organism through operant conditioning, one would use "discriminative stimuli." 11.

The image of "9 x 9" on a flashcard is a discriminative stimulus; the answer (81) is the response, and an inner or outer voice indicating whether that is correct is the reinforcement. The flashcard does not elicit a response in the same way that an alarm does. A response to this would be a reflex, and - in reflex behavior - the stronger the stimulus, the greater the reaction to it. The reaction to a discriminative stimulus is more flexible and depends on past reinforcement. Another example of a discriminative stimulus is the expression, "Come to dinner," which leads to the response of going

to the table, followed by the reinforcement of food.

In reflex behavior, the elicitive stimulus appears to be more coercive because the causal connection is clear and easily observed. Discriminative stimuli, however, share their control with other things in the environment.

"Come to dinner" may share control with the power of the person speaking and past reinforcement; this control is not easy to observe. This is the distinction Skinner makes between voluntary and involuntary behavior.

Since it is Skinner's belief that behavior is not under the control of inner will, the distinction he makes between what we call voluntary and involuntary behavior (for lack of better terms) is in terms of the kind of control. Voluntary behavior is under the control of discriminative stimuli and past reinforcements, and involuntary behavior is under the control of a stimulus and is called a reflex. With this in mind, we can say that operant conditioning is the modification of (what we call) voluntary behavior.

Since inner states or volition are not directly observable, Skinner does not deal with them; he does not deny their existence, but makes it clear that it is unnecessary to consider them in a functional analysis of behavior. He has often said that he is interested only in facts about behavior gleaned from scientific analysis - not conjecture or ideas based on anecdotal information.

Underlying Skinner's belief in scientific analysis is an empiricist's viewpoint - reliance on observation and experiments to decide what is true. Sensory experience and direct observation are an empiricist's only trustworthy sources of knowledge; he arrives at conclusions by using the inductive method and basing conclusions on what is observed.

Because he limited his observations to behavior, Skinner did not see evidence of a separate entity in human beings called a mind or a soul, or a concept of self. Skinner defined an inner concept such as self in terms of behavior, calling it a "functionally unified system of responses." 12. He says that, "...inner events have no special properties just because they occur under the skin." 13. They are bound by the same laws of behavior; there is no mind-body dualism here, for man is considered to be the same kind of substance inside and out.

Compatible with scientific materialism, Skinner's work reflects the idea that everything which exists now is the result of factors and conditions which existed before, and everything which will exist in the future must develop from some combination or change in the present factors and conditions. As he says in *Science and Human Behavior.*

> What a man does is the result of specifiable conditions, including genetic make-up and past history of reinforcement

> and once these have been discovered, we can anticipate and to some extent determine his actions... We can assume that no behavior is free. When all relevant variables have been arrangeed, an organism will or will not respond... If it can it will." 15.

To this I will add that to Skinner, a human being is a locus, a place in which behavior occurs, subject to laws of cause and effect similar to those governing the physical universe. This is a mechanistic view of human beings, who - to Skinner - are highly complex, creative machines; all cause or power comes from without. This is Skinner's behaviorism - the only way in which a scientific materialist or mechanist would study human beings.

Why did Skinner, the behaviorist, want to study human beings? - because, he said, we have discovered the tools of war and destruction and have substantially increased our knowledge of how the world works, but we have very little clear, irrefutable information on how and why humans behave. In 1953, he said that human behavior governs massive scientific experiments, and - if we are to continue as a planet - we must be able to control human behavior as we do atoms. If we don't predict and control human behavior, Skinner feared, we will be faced with famine, overpopulation, and - possibly - atomic war. 15.

Skinner saw that there was a resistance to this because so many of our ideas of human nature are bound up in beliefs about ourselves. In our language, Skinner says, "...we have no clear way

of describing human behavior that is not tied up in conjecture and prejudice." 17. Skinner saw a need for facts, laws, and a science of human behavior. Here is a man who is spending a lifetime studying behavior, using a specific laboratory method - a sharp, rather narrow perspective. In light of this, what contribution has he made to the question of learning? of teaching? of schooling?

Part 2. What Is the Relationship between Operant Conditioning and Learning?

Since Skinner's focus on behavior leads him to a position where he deals exclusively with observable data, his definition of learning centers around how it appears in behavioral terms. According to Skinner and most behaviorists, learning has occurred when there is a change in behavior not attributable to growth or maturation alone, but to reinforcement contingencies. It is not worthwhile, he says, to deal with explanations of learning which view it as an inner process; inner processes are not observable and are - therefore - nonfunctional and irrelevant in a behavioral analysis.

Skinner has also written that the term "learning" can be used to describe the reassortment of responses in a complex situation. 1.

This description could mean that newly acquired responses have to come under the control of new variables in order to be called learning. Response behavior induced by a stimulus, however, is not necessarily learning.

> By "priming behavior. . . telling a student how or what to do through verbal instruction - we evoke (stimulate) a certain response with the help of behavior patterns already established. Skinner reminds us that we should not mistake simple execution of behavior for learning. In short, learning takes place because behavior is reinforced, not merely because it has been primed. Learning can be said to have occurred only if the learner can make similar responses on his own." 2.

If a student learns that 9 x 9 = 81, he/she must be able to give the response in a number of different situations and over a period of time. The new variables would be reinforcements and stimuli of a different kind and intensity. If one could only respond "81" when 9 x 9 was presented in a particular way, this would not be evidence of learned behavior; it would be more like a conditioned reflex.

Skinner has said that the term "learning" is misleading, as in the statement, "The pigeon learned to stretch its neck." A better statement, in behavioral terms, is: We make a given consequence contingent on behavior and the behavior is observed to increase in frequency. This is also an example of operant conditioning - behavior being contingent on reinforcement. To a behaviorist, then,

the proper term for a change in behavior due to reinforcement contingencies is not learning but operant conditioning. Skinner uses the term "learning," but means only the observable part of it. In behavioral terms, one does not learn to play the piano; one is conditioned by a series of reinforcements and stimuli to do so. A student is taught, in the sense that he is induced to engage in new forms of behavior.

Teaching, then, is a technology; teachers must possess knowledge of behavioral science and have the help of instrumentation to do their jobs effectively. They cannot wait for natural reinforcers to shape their students' behavior; students will not plant seeds because they are promptly reinforced by a harvest. An artificial reinforcement must be set up: grades, praise, peer pressure, etc. According to Skinner, a teacher who relies on natural contingencies of reinforcement gives up his/her role as teacher. To expose the student to his/her environment gives no guarantee that the student's behavior would be followed by a reinforcing event; consequently, there is no guarantee that learning has taken place.

Skinner had the idea that since human behavior was so complex and the skills to be developed in schools were so intricate, teachers would need mechanical help: "Teachers need equipment, instrumental support, for it is impossible to arrange contingencies of reinforcement without it." 3. Skinner invented teaching machines,

which provided immediate reinforcement so that students could acquire new behavior efficiently and effectively.

Here are some of the basic characteristics of teaching machines: 4.

1) Each machine is located in its own cubicle so that the pupil is removed from sources of distraction.

2) Most machines have a small window through which an item of information is displayed.

3) Each display is known as a frame of a program; the student is required to read this display and respond to the question which is based on the information given in the frame.

4) When the response is given, the machine advances the program to the next frame; the student is then told whether his previous response was correct or not, and further information and questions are to be found.

Sometimes, a specially designed book may take the place of a machine.

With teaching machines and programmed material, responses are immediately followed by reinforcing environmental consequences. Programs are constructed so that errors are rarely made and each step is small and cautious. This reflects Skinner's repeated assertion that behavior is increased in frequency by reinforcements made dependent on that behavior.

To Skinner, learning or the acquisition of new behavior - is not a trial and error process at all. Behavior changes are functions of trial and success; Skinner's experiments with animals provide

strong empirical support for this assertion. Pigeons have been taught to acquire behavior which showed fine discrimination, through trial and success. Here is an example of a spelling program: the word to be learned is provided in various sentences, but with a letter missing which the student supplies; the number of missing letters is gradually increased, until - eventually - the pupil is asked to use the whole word in an appropriate sentence.

This approach may seem too easy. The belief has been that challenging tasks teach students to think. Skinner seems to think that any kind of behavior, creative or giving evidence of critical thinking, can be taught by a series of progressive programs and not through difficult assignments. A critic of Skinner's mentioned that of course these methods would work if students were motivated, and that motivation needs to be taken care of before teaching machines are used. That is, students must be reinforced to use teaching machines, and want to place themselves in situations in which learning can occur; once they are reinforced to change their behavior (to learn), most techniques work. The problem then becomes one of educational management, rather than teaching and learning. According to Skinner, however, motivation and learning are both behaviors; both can be built into the students' behavior through trial and success.

How does Skinner recommend that one build motivated

behavior? - not by aversive control (negative reinforcement) or by waiting for natural reinforcers to occur. Very little real life motivation goes on in the classroom, so - according to Skinner - natural reinforcers don't work; neither do "ultimate societal reinforcers of eventual fame, money, prestige, 4. because a child might already be reinforced to be lazy, destructive, or in search of negative attention. There are also contrived proximate reinforcers: grades, on-the-spot approval, or prizes; the values of these are questionable, and too much reinforcement loses its value. The most important reinforcers are automatic: when a sentence comes out right, when a word is read correctly; this is where the strongest motivation comes from.

But when automatic reinforcers are too frequent, they also lose their value; a pigeon will stop behavior if reinforced too much. So, says Skinner, it is the teacher's job to make relatively infrequent reinforcements effective. One way is to stretch the ratio - increase the number of responses between reinforcements as rapidly as the students' behavior permits; this intermittent reinforcement allows behavior to continue for long periods of time. Once a skill is stamped in by continuous reinforcement, the teacher should follow a schedule of reducing its frequency.

It is also possible for one to learn to arrange reinforcements in life (self-reinforcement); Skinner says that schooling has never

taught self-management but that technology becomes available when the problem is understood. The boredom and lack of motivation in schools reflects contingencies; through proper understanding, we can create eager, diligent students.

According to Skinner, the process which goes on between teacher and student should be operant conditioning - the teacher controls the student's behavior. Once a subject or quality such as creativity is fully understood and can be expressed in behavioral terms, it can be taught and the behavior produced in the student through operant conditioning. To Skinner, this is the essence of teaching, learning, and education.

Part 3. Skinner's Work Reflected at the Free School

Writing about where I see evidence of operant conditioning at the Free School is difficult, because it is one particular kind of interaction in an environment consisting of many varied interactions - most of them unrehearsed and unpremeditated. Many of the adult-child interactions come from the hearts of those involved; although this can sometimes be seen in behavior, to record only the behavior excludes the observation's coming from intuitive means as opposed

to sight. I am, therefore, looking for evidence of operant conditioning as a part or piece of an interaction; it is as if I am looking for the brush strokes in a Rembrandt. Interactions are so complex and interwoven, that to look at just one piece of an interaction gives only a restricted amount of information.

At present, there are no interactions at the Free School which I could define as operant conditioning - a child's behavior being shaped and maintained with a schedule of reinforcement. This means establishing baseline behavior and deciding on a reinforcement schedule. I do see us using positive reinforcement and the process in which behavior is shaped by the environment; this kind of operant conditioning goes on all the time, just by the nature of our adaptability and responsiveness to the environment.

As far as positive reinforcement goes, we find what is reinforcing to each particular child, connecting with the idea that anything which is pro-life and pro-growth is reinforcing. At the Free School, the process of learning skills is considered as reinforcing as learning to talk. We believe, however, that help is needed in the transition from children's following their own inclinations to learning that there are social and physical environmental limits. In accepting these limits, the children's behavior changes; one could say, then, that the environment is shaping their behavior. In learning to talk, for example, the environment (parents, other people) shapes

the behavior; that's one way to define it.

When a child goes to school, other adults (and peers) take over as reinforcers, attempting to shape the child's behavior to learn basic skills. But it is a cooperative effort between child and adult, to the extent that the behavior being reinforced is that which the child knows is good for him/her. I think that one would have to use a powerful reinforcement (such as brainwashing - a potent form of operant conditioning) to shape someone's behavior into something the person felt was wrong for him/her.

What I am saying is that the Free School uses positive reinforcement, and it works; the behavior we reinforce is good for the child, and the child has to know that on some level, in order for it to work. If you reinforce a child to sit still at a desk for most of the day, the reinforcement has to be potent, because sitting still is something neither children or adults do naturally for long periods of time (unless they are doing something which is self-reinforcing). At the Free School, we reinforce what we know is good for the child; the child tells us this by wanting to be at our school and being happy there.

If many varied attempts at teaching a child to read do not work, we confer with the parents and have the child tested. From this process, we get some new insights, and perhaps come to the realization that there might be a deep aversion to reading. We do our

best to see that the child gets through this block, even if it means letting him have it for a while. We use specific positive reinforcement in a classroom if we think that it will work; we use many methods, but that is not the most important thing.

What is important is that we use our combined powers of observation, memory, intuition, and knowledge of the child's past, the interactions which go on at his/her home, the child's teacher, and the teacher's effect on that child. We also use knowledge of the peer group situation in the class, and - most importantly - what the child has to say for him/herself.

We use all of this information to make a group decision - with the entire elementary section of the school if this is appropriate - sometimes with the child having input, sometimes with the parents, and sometimes with only the teachers. Operant conditioning is one small part of what we do at the Free School; to single it out and look only for positive reinforcement or a schedule of reinforcement would make for a grossly inaccurate description of the teacher-child interactions.

We use programmed learning materials, and some of the children enjoy these. The programmed reading series works well with some children; some are bored by the slowness of the progression, while others are more reinforced by the success which is programmed into it. m e children who use these materials

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successfully, however, are motivated to learn; any system works with motivated kids. The advantages of programmed texts are that they allow children to progress at individual speeds and to correct their own work immediately.

Another point I want to make about operant conditioning and reinforcement contingencies at the Free School is that there are behaviors we want children to have, but they vary with the particular child. It takes all that I have mentioned in the preceding paragraphs to decide what is best for each child, and - sometimes - we are still wrong. To advocate one system of looking at problems in teaching and learning, as I see Skinner doing, would be seriously detrimental to the child and to the teacher.

There are no set techniques when dealing with people; there are too many variables, and to attempt to be scientific (by reducing variables) denies the complexity of the entire process of human relations. Being "scientific" allows people to feel safe and steady in a field where risk-taking, unsteadiness, and uncertainty are part of the process.

From the viewpoint that people do what they are reinforced to do, the Free School's older children are there because they want to be. Being at the Free School is a positive reinforcement in itself - a privilege; if a child doesn't care or want to be there, we suggest that he/she go somewhere else. First, however, we do our best to

find out whether this is truly the case. If a child really wants to be at the Free School, he/she will change his/her behavior in order to work cooperatively within our community.

The trick is to teach children that adapting to certain behaviors is not the same as giving away their souls or individualities. They must learn, however, that it is necessary to behave in a certain way in order to be part of a working, self-governing community. The adults working with the children must experience the effectiveness of this themselves; the important thing is to adapt and to not lose one's sense of individuality.

I see Skinner's work, then, as a small piece of what we do at the Free School - we use positive reinforcement. The school's structure is based on our being positively reinforcing for kids and adults - not in an indulgent way, but in the sense that setting limits with caring and intelligence is what children need. I believe that we answer a need similar to that for food, but it is food for the heart and mind.

We do not have to add other reinforcements such as grades and privileges, because - on a deep level - children know that we want what they want for them; if we are mistaken, they let us know! Children who are disturbed and want self-destructive things for themselves are provided with limits and caring until they begin to want positive, growth-producing experiences. The more that we at

the Free School are aware of children's needs, the fewer extrinsic reinforcements we have to use.

Part 4. Criticism of Skinner's Work on Operant Conditioning and Its Relationship to Education

Skinner does not take into account the relationship between the person administering reinforcement and the one whose behavior is being shaped. To shape behavior, one must use a reinforcer which is powerful enough to affect that behavior. Children or subjects will decide to give up what they are doing or continue it, based on the effect their actions are having or on whether the outside reinforcement is stronger than the inner one. For the reinforcement to be strong enough, an experimenter must, to a certain extent, be in control of a subject's life; the experimenter can provide rewards which the subject cannot procure for him/herself.

An outdoor stroll can be a reinforcement to someone with limited access to the outdoors; an hour of free play can be a bonus if

free play is restricted. For operant conditioning to work well, freedom, in a sense, must be restricted. When someone gives rewards, he/she is saying: I have the power to make what you are doing worthwhile or not; I control your experience at this particular time. Operant conditioning is powerful; it will work if the experimenter or teacher creates a state of deprivation.

Skinner's entire focus was to study behavior through what he called a scientific perspective; this entailed dealing only with observable data this was *all* he saw. He redefined human beings in terms of their behavior; it is a narrow way of looking at things, and I think he sacrificed much by insisting on hard facts. As Henri Poincaré says, "Pure empiricism does not make science more rigorous: rather it makes it less adequate. A mere collection of facts is no more a science than a pile of bricks a house." 1.

Skinner's idea was that learning is based on trial and success - not trial and error; in this way, an outside source chooses what is successful and reinforces it. m e student does not or is not encouraged to figure out for him/herself whether he/she is right. How can a person whose behavior is shaped by another develop his/her own powers of discrimination? Can this power be programmed as well? Skinner says yes, but it has yet to be done. Without failure, how can we recognize our own successes? I think that operant conditioning inhibits the discriminatory process, as one

becomes dependent on an outside source to judge the correctness of an experience or a learning situation.

I think that Skinner had the right idea about how human nature works: people do things because they are reinforced to do so. But Skinner's idea to use this information to control people seems a dangerous perversion of a natural process (the end does not justify the means), especially when dealing with human beings. There is something awesome about exerting power over an external event; if one looks at what this does to the relationships involved, one can see some of the ill effects.

This is not a simple issue, because man has exerted control over natural events for some time now, and we have yet to see the entirety of this process' ill effects. Once these are made clear, we can balance out the good and the bad which have come from technology (if, by then, it is not too late because the effects are irreversible). If, perhaps, in the face of our own power we are continually awestruck and humbled by nature's power and beauty, and by ourselves - and if we recognize a power greater than ourselves - bad things won't happen. I do not think, however, that the solution is that simple; I think that it will have something to do with the ways we learn and use our intelligence.

If one looks at education today, one sees that its institutions are based on outer control instead of on helping its students to

develop inner control. One begins to see that we are training our young to continue to make these same mistakes by looking for someone or something to control and shape, because they have been controlled and shaped. Is this a context for learning? Skinner's concept of education is hierarchical and not cooperative; it is based not on people helping each other to learn but on one person deciding which behavior is appropriate for another. The people involved are not truly being with each other; the relationship is mechanical, having no heart and leading to more control.

In the next part of my paper, I will discuss the work of John Dewey, who sees education as a cooperative social process. Dewey observes the empirical evidence, but looks at relationships and the context of things. He does not see education as a technique; but as an integral part of life.

Footnotes:

Part 1.

1. Skinner, *Science and Human Behavior* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1953), p. 5.
2. Ibid., p. 53.
3. Ibid., P. 592
4. Ibid., p. 60.
5. Ibid., p. 66.
6. Ibid., p. 103.
7. Ibid., p. 84.
8. Ibid., p. 90.

9. Ibid., p. 91.
10. Ibid., p. 92.
11. Ibid., p. 108.
12. Ibid., p. 285.
13. Ibid., p. 459.
14. Ibid., pp. 6-7.
15. B.F. Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (New York: Knopf, 1971).
16. B.F. Skinner, *Science and Human Behavior*, pp. 4-5.
17. B.F. Skinner, *Cumulative Record*, "Science of Learning" (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Press, R. Eliot, Editor), p. 53.

Part 2.
1. B.F. Skinner, *The Technology of Teaching* (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts), p. 210.
2. Ibid., p. 113.
3. Ibid., pp. 22-28.
4. Ibid., p. 107.

Part 4.
1. Irving E. Sigel, D. Erodzinsky, R. Golinkoff, Lawrence Erlbawn, Editors, *New Directions in Piagetian m Theory and Practice* (Hillsdale, New Jersey: 1981), p. 158.

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Statements on Waldorf Education (unsolicited)

I think that it is not exaggerated to say that no other educational system in the world gives such a central role to the arts as the Waldorf School Movement. There is not a subject taught that does not have an artistic aspect. Even mathematics is presented in an artistic fashion and related via dance, movement or drawing to the child as a whole...Steiner's system of education is built on the premise that art is an integral part of human endeavors. He gives it back its true role. Anything that can be done to further his revolutionary educational ideas will be of the greatest importance.

Konrad Oberhuber
Curator of Drawings, Fogg Art Museum;
Professor of Fine Arts, Harvard University

If I had a child of school age, I would send him to one of the Waldorf Schools.

Saul Bellow, Nobel Laureate

I first heard of Waldorf education about five years ago, after having carried out extensive study of the neurological aspects of cognition, movement, and maturation. I was delighted to discover such a neurologically sound curriculum. I heartily support efforts to spread the awareness of Waldorf education and hope that it will spawn not only an increase in Waldorf Schools but an infusion of at least some of the ideas into the mainstream where they are so sorely needed. In Colorado I am working with several districts to incorporate various Waldorf strategies into the teaching of reading and mathematics. The ideas were very well received and very much needed.

Dee Joy Coulter, Ed. D.
Instructor, University of Northern Colorado
Outreach Educational Consultant

As a psychiatrist with a special interest in developmental issues as well as a parent of two daughters educated at the New York City Rudolf Steiner School from nursery and second grade through high school, I have been fascinated by how deftly the approach taken by Waldorf educators dovetails with levels of development in childhood. It seems to me that my daughters, the elder about to graduate from medical school, the younger in her first year at law school, have benefited not only intellectually, but socially and in terms of cultural and athletic interests as well from the breadth and depth of the curriculum their teachers have presented to them.

Iona Ginsburg, MD
Asst. Clinical Professor of Psychiatry,
Columbia University; Member, Board of Directors
of the New York Society for Adolescent Psychiatry;
Past President of the Metropolitan Mental Health Association

My daughter Diana's experience at the Sacramento Waldorf School was both exciting and mind-opening. I hope that more people can make Waldorf education available to their children.

Russell Schweickart
NASA astronaut, technology advisor (1953 - 79);
Member, California Energy Commission;
former Assistant to the Governor in Science and Technology.

I used to think of Waldorf education as the most undamaging system, and then the more I looked into it, I found that it was the most beneficial system we've got.

What we hear leveled at the Waldorf schools is 'what will happen to my child out there in the world if he doesn't learn to read and write very quickly?' The issue is that the child's greatest strength for survival in a world of madness is to be totally whole, sane and in touch with the heart. The beauty of the Waldorf school

is that it is designed entirely to keep children intact until they are ready to move out into the world as whole individuals.

There were three major studies done recently that dealt with the disappearance of childhood in America. If there is any one thing that the Waldorf system does, it nurtures, protects and develops beautifully the intelligence of the true child.

Joseph Chilton Pearce,
author of Magical Child,
The Crack in the Cosmic Egg

Steiner was way ahead of this time. What he recognized about learning in the first part of this century is gradually being substantiated by new discoveries in brain research. The need for each individual to recreate his own meaning, mind-body relationships, and the involvement of the emotions play a critical role in truly effective learning. Waldorf education has been working with these principles for more than sixty years and is only now being recognized. It has been putting into effect what major brain researchers and educators are discovering about the human brain/mind. What Rudolf Steiner envisioned is only beginning to be a part of the educational consciousness of the 80's.

Gabriel Rico
author, Writing the Natural Way,
Learning the Natural Way; The Creation of Meaning
Professor of English and Creative Arts,
San Jose State University

I have supported Waldorf education for years, with my daughter attending the Rudolf Steiner schools in Cologne. Now she is attending medical school in Sienna, Italy.

Mauricio Kagel
World-renowned composer,
Cologne, W. Germany

I support with enthusiasm the efforts with which the Waldorf School of the Peninsula is being initiated and formed and consider it to be a very special, vital gift to our community.

Dane Rudhyar
World-renowned philosopher and composer,
Palo Alto, California

The Steiner Waldorf educational system puts the proper balance of emphasis between the academic and the cultural and artistic growth of the child. For most children it seems to be a much more positive way of learning than the conventional tested educational system.

Gary Durtz
Film producer; American Graffiti, Star Wars,
The Empire Strikes Back, Dark Crystal, Oz

FROM THE PROFESSIONS

Waldorf education enables young people to be in love with the world as the world should be loved.

Marjorie Spock, Author, Waldorf teacher,
sister of Dr. Benjamin Spock

Waldorf schools express a new educational consciousness, appropriate for our time.

M. C. Richard, Ph.D.,
Author of Centering *and* TowardWholeness

Waldorf schools aim to produce socially involved adults of independent judgment, able to come to new forms and contents of knowledge.

Eva A. Frommer, Psychiatrist in charge, Children's Psychiatric Clinic, St. Thomas' Hospital, London; Waldorf alumna

No other elementary and secondary school environment has been created by man which is expressly and effectively dedicated to nurturing the child's capacities of wonder, reverence, and responsibility while providing a curriculum of the highest quality.

Paul Livadary, J.D.Senior partner, Parker, Milliken, Clark, O'Hara, and Samuelian, Los Angeles

...Waldorf education remains to become better known to Americans. Other independent educational movements, much less thoroughgoing in their attempts to integrate at every level of education, art, science, and an appreciation of the fully human, have curiously been given much more attention. At a time of searching and reappraisal in American education, the Waldorf Movement with its unique understanding of the education of the child and its years of teaching practice and institutional experience deserves the informed consideration of those genuinely concerned with education and the development of human wholeness.

Douglas Sloan, Ph.D.Professor, Columbia University Teachers College; former editor, Teachers College Record

There is no task of greater importance than to give our children the very best preparation for the demands of an ominous future, a preparation which aims at the methodical cultivation of their spiritual and their moral gifts. As long as the exemplary work of the Waldorf School Movement continues to spread its influence as it has

done over the past decade, we can all look forward with hope. I am sure that Rudolf Steiner's work for children must be considered a central contribution to the twentieth century and I feel it deserves the support of all freedom-loving thinking people.

Bruno Walter
Conductor

The implications of Gesell's and Steiner's observations are clear to educators. Pushing skills before children are biologically ready sets them up to fail...Springing as it did from careful observations of the child, it's not surprising that Waldorf education arrived at the same conclusion [as the Gesell Institute], and applies the same principles to development of curricula for children's education.

Sidney MacDonald Baker, M.D.
Executive Director, Gesell Institute of Human Development,
New Haven, Connecticut

FROM THE SCIENCE WORLD

As a scientist involved in research into the physics of perception I am impressed both with the content of this curriculum, which includes 'right-hemispheric' learning activities to complement the analytical or 'left-hemispheric' side, and with the style of the curriculum, which promotes direct involvement, creativity, and attention to detail. This holistic, well-grounded, and in-depth approach is what is required to meet the challenges of a stressful, fast-moving technological age, while keeping one's will and sense of purpose alive and whole.

Harold Puthoff, Ph.D.
Senior Researcher at SRI International;
internationally known scientist;
Author of numerous papers, articles and books on
quantum electronics, lasers and paranormal phenomena.

Waldorf education is most essentially an education which leads the human being to be at home in the world.

John Davy
former Science Editor, London Observer

I am very grateful for the education I got. It has been important to me.

Dr. Andrew Engel
Waldorf school alumnus, leading x-ray astronomy researcher, Imperial College, London

FROM MUSIC AND THE ARTS

In my profession, as long as an international airport is nearby I can live wherever I choose, but I would only choose a city with a Rudolf Steiner school for my children. Waldorf education is the only world impulse I know of which truly guides children to those strengths necessary to counter-balance the inwardly deadening influences encountered throughout life.

Miha Pogacnik
Internationally renowned virtuoso concert violinist; featured soloist in Prades Festival, Berlin Bach Festival, Corinthian Summer Festival

I am deeply grateful for Waldorf education, which woke me up and helped me rediscover my imagination.

Michael Ende
Author of The Neverending Story,
recently released film

Until a man has learned to listen he has no business teaching: until he realizes that every man has something of truth and wisdom to offer, he does not begin to learn.

It is only when he sees how each of his fellows surpasses him that a man begins to be wise, to himself and to his fellow men.

ΣΚΟΛΕ

Winter, 1991. Volume VII. No. 1.

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ΣΚΟΛΕ appears twice a year. It publishes accounts of individual schools; articles related to the subject of alternatives or innovations in education (widely defined); critiques of models of education other than those designated as "alternative;" theoretical considerations associated with schools, schooling, learning and teaching; "how-to" articles; poems, stories and articles written by students, teachers and others who have a sense of kinship with this amorphous and inclusive concept of teaching/learning; and reprints or musings on life in general written by anyone who feels so inclined. We welcome manuscripts by educators, interested by-standers, parents and thoughtful students of all ages. Interesting photographs are very welcome, and will be returned if so designated.

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Cover photograph: Rosalie Bianchi (see article on Piaget, Skinner and Dewey in this issue) and Lou Fiscarelli with Starlene Polene at The Free School, Albany, New York, 1974.

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

This is our first officially printed issue based entirely on revenue from subscriptions. It is a prayerful moment for me. When I re-inherited *ΣΚΟΑΕ* from Mary Ellen and Michael at the central office of NCACS, my subscription base had eroded from over a hundred to fifty-some, despite their notices in the Newsletter and the super-membership scheme, intended to benefit both the Coalition and *ΣΚΟΑΕ*.

I value my subscribers as like-minded people involved with kids' growth and learning, and losing so many felt to me like losing contact with valued friends and comrades in the common task, so I've been sending out letters and questionnaires asking people for feedback and help. Wow! I am floored (happily) by the encouragement and love I've been getting from the people who have responded! I've already received enough money for the next issue! Here are some answers to my inquiry as to:

Why subscribers decided to resubscribe, and what they like:

ΣΚΟΑΕ is unique and rich!

I totally support alternative schooling.

I have followed the progress of *ΣΚΟΑΕ* with personal interest. I pray you get enough renewals and/or new subscriptions to keep publishing.

There is no other publication like it!

I love Mary (*Hey, I like that one!*)

I love *ΣΚΟΑΕ* and you (*All right! I'm for that!*).

It keeps alive the things I value.

I enjoy reading and interacting with the articles in *ΣΚΟΑΕ*.

I like Mary's letter and the idea of a **journal in which readers contribute** (*Get it? Do it, please!*)

I love you. - sorry, but that's the truth! (*Love that truth!*)

I like reading about alt. ed.

I enjoyed reading the articles. The last issue was my first one.

We enjoy most of it very much - the fresh, independent approach treating children as individuals with brains.

I believe in the Coalition and the Journal is an open resource for me to read and write for. I like the informality, humanness, directness, non-slickification, in the last issue I found about 75% of the articles really engaging.

We are interested in other small schools' ideas and events.

I love *ΣΚΟΑΕ*! I like the fact that people who care enough to write something that is relevant to Alternative Ed can be published here - that I have access to both old and new thoughts and opinions.

You called it to my attention and I think *ΣΚΟΑΕ* is vital. I like the new look, the length of the articles, the experience of the contributors.

I find the articles thought-provoking and current. I like the mix of things, which reflects life and the connection between education and life. Mary, your editorship in bringing the variety together is wonderful.

I like that we have one [a journal] as a community. I like the more 'informal'articles.

You reminded me! I like it because it's eclectic. Nature articles have heart (as opposed to some ed. journals with their publish-or-perish articles). Don't like so much that's it's only twice a year, but know at first hand how much work is involved putting it out!

I like, enjoy, read, use and contribute to it! I like the more "scholarly," in-depth approach to alternative education issues. I am not so happy about the prospect of it not continuing.

Didn't realize we had lapsed.

I stopped procrastinating.

I like the layout, articles. the non-slick look.

What do people want to read?

Writing by/about earlier education thinkers, doers, originators, e.g., Pestalozzi, Homer Lane, Neill, etc.

Book reviews of books on alt. ed. or of value to all of us.

Teacher education in the U.S. university environment.

Real things.

School after school after school.

Racial segregation and inequality.

The same kind of quality pieces you've been publishing, plus some possible retrospective reprints from "old" New Schools Exchange, etc., alternative ed./free school mags. [*Me too, and I'll do it. Thanks!*]

Articles about learning - mind/body connection.

Educational philosophy.

Ecological activism.

Teacher training.

Movements in education in other countries.

More personal experiences - more students' articles, more pictures.

Resources.

Staffing. Issues - i.e., Chris' article was great. Also money - how do programs survive?

Spirituality as it relates.

What will people do for *ΣΚΟΛΕ*?

Send a copy to Governor Romer of Colorado.

Show it to people who are interested in alt. ed.

Show a copy to the local library.

Take a copy to many colleges and urge the chairmen of the ed. dept. to subscribe.

Show it to our local PTA.

Show it to big, prosperous alternative schools in Asheville.

Take a copy to the chairman of the education dept. of College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor, Maine.

Put a plug for ***ΣΚΟΛΕ*** in our next newsletter.

Work with kids to write poetry for ***ΣΚΟΛΕ***.

Show it to my local library, take a copy to our college and urge the chairman of the ed. dept. to subscribe.

Become a patron for $50. [*Yippee ! That makes five patrons!*]

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Show it to the local junior college library.

Write an article by...?

Write an article for the Spring issue and something else for the Winter issue. Send a copy of a paper presented to Amer. Ed. Studies Ass'n. in Orlando, FL.

Write an article.

Write a poem by ?

Write an article whenever, list *ΣΚΟΑΕ* in resource section of journal under publications.

Write an article in one year.

Send a copy of an article currently being written.

Write an article on environmental activism and race for the Winter issue.

Write an article "whenever I crawl out from under this humongous pile affectionately called 'my work.'" I haven't given up on myself yet."

Collect poems from students for the same issue, show it to the parents' group at the school, create B&W photos for the issue.

[I especially liked this one]: Bug me, bug me, bug me. [*Will do!*]

Kindly comments:

Don't lose heart! You are doing a much-needed and valuable service!

Keep up the faith, Mary - doesn't all really important work always involve struggle? - know you have our support and love!

Many, many thanks to you all. How can I lose with support like this? Oh - and I have put several lengthy, thoughtful responses in the **Letters** section! Do read them equally thoughtfully - and maybe something will prompt you to write in too.

Now, if *everybody* will just remember the comment about the journal being one in which readers contribute - and that really does mean you! - we'll do it! Hey - if "our" Chris (Mercogliano)

managed - as he has - to find the courage, eloquence and involvement in wanting enough to make a contribution to challenge his own writing anxiety (and believe me, he had had a big hangup and has had to struggle to overcome it!), you can too! *Please* do it, and I promise I'll let your grandmothers out of the closets, OK? No creativity hangups allowed. Remember, we're the innovators, and I intend to hold you to your splendid offers. Anyone else want to be bugged? Just call me la cucaracha!

One caveat, if I may. The article (in the **REPRINTS** section) on Howard Gardner's "multiple intelligences," for readers of *ΣΚΟΛΕ* who subscribed recently, needs, in my opinion, to be balanced by Dave Lehman's highly significant article in the Summer, 1986 *ΣΚΟΛΕ* criticizing the entire notion on (to this reader) far more salient grounds than those offered by most of Gardner's critics - namely, that "lacking school intelligence" is a term which properly belongs to an indictment of schools themselves, not to the so-called intelligence (or lack thereof) of children - and to build curricula on Gardner's definition is essentially to postpone grappling with the entire meaning of school. Write me for a reprint of Dave's article ($1.50). It's a real goodie, and I think it's significant that ***none*** of the "professional" education journals to which he offered it would publish it! I am very grateful to Dave for offering it to us!

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By the way, speaking of old issues of *ΣΚΟΛΕ*, I am in the process of reissuing them on my Mac, for a university library in Germany, so if you want copies, let me know. They'll be ready in February or March, and will cost $10 apiece. It's been fun re-doing them on the Mac, and has reminded me of how many really fine articles I've been privileged to publish! I would think, myself, that regardless of the issue of whether or not *ΣΚΟΛΕ* is "the official" journal of the NCACS, whether or not it is "flawed" as a professional publication - as, I might add, are we all as "educators," - or, for that matter, as human beings! - it should still have a place in the libraries of the member schools - or at least, of those that have one. It's our history we're recording, after all. "Those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it," right ? Well, I was a history major, so that's my perspective.

Enough of this "world according to Garp Leue." Off we go! Hope you enjoy the issue!

Love, Mary
(Just call me Ed Garp)

The Free School, 1976.

PROFILE: The Free School, Albany, New York

HISTORY OF THE FREE SCHOOL
by Mary M. Leue

In 1969, my husband and I, accompanied by our two youngest kids, returned from a year in England, where the two kids had been enrolled in a village school. It had been a good year for them, especially for Mark, and the return to a typical Albany fifth grade in the public school he had been attending before we left was a real shock. Thirty-five kids were cooped up in a classroom designed for twenty, with a teacher so frazzled and overworked that she actually had to be hospitalized on the psychiatric ward of our local hospital shortly after I let Mark persuade me that he really couldn't stand the prison-like atmosphere any longer. Any hesitation I may have had as to the wisdom of this decision vanished when I heard of her breakdown. Mark had good instincts, as do most kids!

The first thing I had to do was to establish the legality of keeping Mark at home, and the principal of his school left me no doubt on this issue, calling me to warn me of legal action against me the very day the school nurse ascertained from me that Mark was indeed not sick but had withdrawn from school. Being in the state capital, I decided to make some phone calls to find out for myself if this was actually the case, since I was a teacher. I was fortunate indeed to find a man in the curriculum department of the state department of education who assured me that my action was legal, and who offered to give "state guidelines" to anyone from the local

school board who hassled me. This, again, was fortunate, because the very next day I received a call from the head of the bureau of "attendance and guidance," (the truant officer), who began an impassioned harangue warning me of the terrible things that were about to occur to me should I refuse to bring Mark back at once, but calmed right down when I gave him the name of the man from "State Ed."

Shortly after this, he called back and apologized for his previous manner, assuring me that what I was doing was fine, and that he would be happy to give me any help he could if I should run into any problems. And, actually, during the fourteen years of our existence, this has been the case. Joe Markham has been our liaison with the superintendent of schools, has given us a lot of help in various times of trouble including a brush two years ago with the county health department, and has been not only respectful of our operation but really sympathetic with our purpose, since his chief clientele comes from the same "population" ours does, and he knows the problems that can arise.

About two weeks after Mark and I got started on our tutorial venture, I ran into a friend with six children in another of Albany's "finest" public schools, and when she heard what I had done, begged me to take on her three youngest, who she said were acting as though their lives were on the line every morning when going-to-school time came around, and whom she usually ended up having to accompany there. One of my chief worries had been that Mark would feel isolated from his friends, and this sounded great, so I

agreed at once, and we were in the school business!

The year we spent at my home went swimmingly. We all loved the experience, and since it was the year of the student strikes and the Cambodia crisis, as well as the initiation of "Earth Day," it was a very exciting time to be "free" of school - and for me, to be actually conducting my own little "unschool," planning and carrying out my own design of curriculum, which included a lot of projects like picking up twelve trash bags of cans, bottles and other garbage thrown down an embankment by the side of a public road near the house (on Earth Day), helping at a day care center set up for the children of university strikers and others, putting on home-written plays, learning to develop film, making our own movies, cooking and baking, and generally enjoying ourselves a great deal while learning the three R's.

Toward the end of the year, we took a vote and decided to go on with the school the following year, even though the other three were moving during the summer, and so, we would be back to a population of one. I decided to ask for advice at this point, and went to see a friend of mine whom I trusted as having an enlightened view of children's education, she being the religious education director of the local Unitarian Church where I had taught Sunday School for a number of years. Her advice was to have a talk with an educational filmmaker in Newton, Massachusetts, who was running a resource center for early childhood education and whose films dealt with the development of successful alternative education programs in various places, notably the experiments in

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Philadelphia associated with the Parkway Program, but on an elementary level.

I took a week off from school, and went on my travels. Alan Leitman, the filmmaker, received me warmly, and gave me several suggestions. One was that I first ask a local newspaper to do a feature on our little school, and then that I rent a few films depicting the kind of school I was interested in creating and show them in community places, in order to attract the kinds of families who would want our kind of school for their kids. He also suggested that I visit a few "free schools" in the New York state and New England regions, to see how they actually look in action. He warned me to start small, learn my "trade" at every stage of the process before moving to a larger operation, and in general, to ensure that the enterprise was sound at every step of the way; that we really knew our business and were accomplishing what we set out to do, not just playing kid games. That advice still governs everything we do.

So, I began that very day, visiting Jonathan Kozol's Roxbury Community School on the way home, and three others over the following few days, one in Buffalo, one in Syracuse, and a third in New York City. A week later an article appeared in the newspaper which included large pictures of the five of us gathered (untypically) around our round dining room table surrounded by books and papers. It also mentioned that I would be showing three films on "free school" education at the Unitarian Church and at the university, which I did the following week to crowded rooms of

fascinated adults whose appetite for information about this new "thing" seemed boundless. Out of these three exposures to the public, I found a group of four families interested in sending us their children and in working as a group to help us find a suitable building and at least one other teacher for the seven kids who would be involved.

Suddenly, providentially and wholly unexpectedly, a friend of my older sons gave me a call and asked if he could drop over to chat. Puzzled, I agreed, and lo, what he wanted to talk about was his wish to quit high school teaching (where his best friend had been recently fired for refusing to shave off his beard) and come to teach with me at our fledgling school, now christened "The Free School" by my four students. I agreed enthusiastically, and introduced him to our little group of parents at the next strategy meeting. They were equally delighted.

By this time, June was over and our school was out for the summer. One other mother and I set out in earnest to find a building where we could hold forth, and right away, the first snags began to appear. There were no buildings to be had that we could afford which would give us what I knew to be an absolute necessity as a school site - one large room for gatherings, roughhouse, and general togetherness, plus enough additional space for activity rooms, eating, a lab, at least one good bathroom, an office, a good-sized kitchen, and play space outside. We literally searched for weeks, surveying the entire region, even including the top floor of a factory building which would have been ideal as a huge area on which we

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Bruce and Mary, Summer of 1971.

could erect our own partitions at will, the owners of which had been playing with offering it to the city for a municipally-funded day care center. At the last minute, they said no, after learning that we would be privately funded at a rate far below what they had been hoping to get from the city! Like Tom Lehrer's "old dope peddler," they had wanted to "do well by doing good."

We began desperately asking churches for space in their Sunday School quarters, were refused by at least three church boards and suddenly, were offered the rental of an entire church building for $100 a month by a black minister whose congregation had bought a fine stone church across town and were moving out. This was a frame building in a state of great neglect but essential soundness, and we grabbed for it frantically and with great relief, because, by this time it was nearing the end of the summer and we had not yet even begun to prepare the space for the school. After a hasty consultation with our parent group, and with the reality of our financial straits before our faces, we all agreed on this building, which was in the inner city. The price was right, the size was ideal, and our appetite for renovation was boundless, none of us having done any!

Immediately, we all set out to put it into usable shape. Working virtually around the clock, sharing coffee and sandwiches far into the night, we worked to cover up the grime with new paint, even going so far as to paint floor-to-ceiling blackboards in several rooms, scrubbing whatever we could not paint, attaching as a fire escape an iron staircase we found at a wrecking company to an

upstairs door which had opened onto thin air, for a reason none of us ever fathomed. By the time school started, we had already grown to love this place, funky as it was, but indisputably ours!

One event which had charmed and excited me, but which proved a harbinger of trouble to come, was the fact that, no sooner had we opened our doors (to let in fresh air as well as to bring in ladders and so on) than hordes of curious black children began coming inside, asking us a zillion questions and begging to be allowed to stay and color or play school. These ranged from the ages of three and four up to twelve at least, all from Southern black refugee families who had come seeking work in this northern city, and all wanted to know, "What dis place?" When they learned that we were a school ("A *school* ? You a school? Yo' kids goin' play heah?), asked us, "Kin ah come?"

We began having dreams of attracting a whole schoolful of neighborhood kids as students. Our universal answer to their questions was, "Go ask your momma, and if she says you can, you tell her to come and talk with us and then you can come here, OK?" The older ones would ask, "Do it cost money?" and my instinct was always to say, "No, it's free." My hunger for the children was always greater than my financial sense, and I guess I haven't yet changed that. Fortunately for me, Bruce, the other teacher, felt the same way about the children as I did, so at least at this point, there was no trouble. But it was coming.

Oddly enough, it came from the direction of the only black mother among our parent group, Dorothy, a well-educated and

cultured woman whose husband was a university professor, but who had evidently grown up in Harlem among lower class black people. Her eight-year-old son Telly was obviously quite timorous in the presence of so many street-wise ghetto children, especially of two brothers, one ten, the other twelve, whose father had been living alone in a tiny apartment on the first floor of the church as caretaker, and whose presence struck us as a good idea, especially since he was on SSI payments for a bad back, and so, required no pay for continuing to keep an eye on the building in a neighborhood swarming with bold and curious kids who had nothing in their lives to catch their passion except illegal but highly exciting street activities of one sort or another. Also, he was the father of these particular brothers, whom we had spotted as potential troublemakers or students, depending on how we played our cards.

One day while Dorothy was painting walls and Telly was playing with Gary and Larry, the brothers, and I was scrubbing the bathroom floor off the kitchen, I heard yelling and then an awful sound of thumping, over and over! I ran out, and was just in time to see Gary and Larry pick themselves up at the bottom of our very long, steep staircase. Dorothy was standing at the top of the stairs, yelling down at them to go home (they lived with their mother on a nearby street.) Both boys stood for a while at the bottom of the stairs stunned, then broke into a run and disappeared. When I inquired from Dorothy what had happened, she told me Larry had been holding Telly's arms pinned at his sides while Gary began to run at him with his head lowered in butting position. She had

intervened at this point and had taken both boys by the arm, dragged them to the stairs and bodily thrown them down! I was appalled, but she was so visibly shaken herself that I knew that this was not the time to try to reason with her.

But when a crowd of angry black men, women, and children of various sizes appeared in the street in front of the building, some of them armed with iron pipes and bricks, I told Dorothy quietly, "I would like you to go down and talk with these people. I'll come with you, but this has to be set straight, and you will have to do it if you can." The scene that followed would have been the ultimate irony if it had not been so poignantly tragic. Picture Dorothy, attractive and cultured in her modified Afro hair-style, silver linen skirt and hand-woven blouse, finely crafted silver earrings dangling from her ears, hand-made sandals on her feet, crying out passionately to this group of black people whose whole appearance bespoke their proximity in time and history to the post-reconstruction agricultural south of the share-cropper newly come north to seek refuge from hunger and despair, "I know you people! I am one of you! I grew up with people just like you, and you are all killers!" To me, it was a wonder they didn't lynch her on the spot. But gradually, by degrees, Bruce and I managed to quiet the mob spirit by apologizing for the incident and assuring the tribe (for it turned out that every one of them were the boys' relatives - aunts, uncles, cousins, and so on) that it would not happen again, and that we regretted it very much. It was a foretaste of what was to come out of our naive and explosive effort to conduct a free school for

middle-class people (among others) in the midst of a totally neglected and furiously angry welfare proletariat (I cannot think of any other term which so aptly fits the characteristics of this group).

The school year got underway in early September, initially with eleven kids, all middle-class. Bruce and I found we could work together very well indeed, and our parents seemed happy with the new experiment. We met weekly to discuss funding and other considerations, and seemed to get on very well together. One day late in the month a charming young woman, Kathy, appeared at our door and asked if she could teach with us, having just graduated from an Ohio school of education. Of course, we agreed enthusiastically, and the children all fell in love with her.

Our only problem was finding enough money to pay salaries, rent, phone and utilities. We all came up with all sorts of strategies for raising this money, and participated enthusiastically in doing so. We had bake sales, rummage sales, garage sales, and candy sales, all good middle-class strategies our parents could throw themselves into enthusiastically. None of them raised much money, but they were a lot of fun. Soon three other families joined us, and we really felt we had a nice little school going. Gary, the younger of the black boys whom Dorothy had been pushed downstairs, asked to become a member of the school, and we all agreed amicably - even Dorothy and her husband. Things seemed to be going amazingly well.

Then two things happened, some time in December or early January. Two new children enrolled in the school, and two new

Albert and Ben

families brought us their children, a significant distinction, as it turned out.. The mix proved to be dynamite. First, the children. One snowy day a bedraggled little troupe of four children resembling nothing so much as Wendy and the lost boys from *Peter Pan* arrived on our doorstep from out of the soft white opaqueness that covered the city's ugliness.. "What is this place?" asks one. "A school," we answer. "Can we visit?" "Sure, if you behave yourselves." So in they come: Cathy, a skinny girl of fifteen (as we subsequently learned) who could pass for twelve, Joey and Earl, her brothers, ten and eleven, one light-skinned, the other white; and Albert, their white cousin, a kid of thirteen the size of an average seven-year-old and with a manner to match, squint-eyed and "hyper," having been labeled by the school psychologist as retarded, with an IQ of 60-some and in a "special education" course, a total non-reader, and slated for residential warehousing in a state school for the retarded.

Naturally, these truants were delighted with us all, and immediately asked if they could join the school. Standard response, "Go home and ask your mother. If it's O.K. with her, it's O.K. with us."

Well, Albert was sure his mother would approve, and dashed off to ask her. Cathy, who seemed to be the spokesperson for all three members of her family, informed us that her mother was dead and that her father probably would not agree, but said she would ask anyway. Half an hour later, Albert appeared virtually dragging his mother, who reluctantly gave her approval of his

admission, saying, "Well, I was just about ready to send him to Rome anyway (a state institution for retarded children which subsequently became notorious for its flagrant abuse and neglect of its inmates). I can't do nothin' with him, and that school has him in one of them special classes. He ain't learnin' nothin'. If he wants to come here, it'll be the first time he ever wanted to be in a school, so I guess he can come here."

Albert was so overjoyed at this that he whooped and sprang upon me, wrapping both arms and legs around my body and squeezing tightly, as if to insure a permanent bond that would never again come loose! And actually, it never has!

Albert was with us for three exciting years, during which time he managed to create lots of drama around himself. Once he nearly electrocuted himself fiddling with the guts of an old TV set. Once I had to bail him out of the local police station for robbing somebody's mailbox of their welfare check! Mainly, however, he couldn't sit still in one place for more than a few minutes! It was as though his energy system simply worked too fast for him to be able to slow down long enough to learn how to decode the verbal symbols, which to me was an odd definition of retardation! Is it "retarded" to live too rapidly? The spirit in that "retarded" body was absolutely pure and sweet!

But the miracle of Albert takes up long after we left off, and for me, is the most confirming evidence of the real nature of learning I have ever known. When he left, at the age of nearly sixteen, he still couldn't read, although his math was pretty good. He didn't

learn to read for many, many years - despite enrolling *twice* in adult education programs after leaving us. He finally quit trying, and got a job in a garage for a while until they fired him for not being able - or willing - to complete jobs. The next thing we heard, he was married, at about seventeen, and had a child. He would come back from time to time, full of optimism about his future, but he couldn't seem to stick at anything for long. For a while he lived in Florida on welfare with his wife and child. Then we heard he had enrolled in another reading course, still unable to read, and had been drifting from one job to another and from one part of the country to another. Somehow he seems to have kept the dream in his mind of learning to read.

I saw him on the street near his house during one of his periodic trips home about six years after he left us. I asked him how it was going. He answered, shaking his head solemnly, "Well, I had to leave my wife and come back home. We were fighting too much. But Mary, you should see my room now. I got shelves all around my bed and I keep buyin' books to put on them. I *love* books!" Could he read? No, not really, not yet. I parted from him with wet eyes.

One day some years later I got a call from a Catholic priest in a nearby city who wanted to know if this young man Albert was for real, did he *really* want to learn how to read, was what he was telling him actually true? By this time, Albert must have been around twenty-four or so. In ordinary terms, his story was pretty unbelievable, I guess. I said it was all true, that he was somebody

special, and urged him to do the best he could for our Albert. I don't know if it was this time he made it or the next time, but somehow, some way, he got through that narrow door! One of our teachers, Chris, who had known him at school, saw him at the supermarket just before Christmas. Chris was blown away. He said Albert had grown almost a foot, that his crooked eyes were now straight, and that he looked *manly* - his hair was no longer sticking up in unruly points, he looked at you clear-eyed and steadily. Albert told Chris that he could now read, and loved it, and had a good job and a good marriage with four kids - that his life was great! Chris told us he could see that it was true! We don't take credit for that. It is Albert's triumph! But he learned that ability to believe in himself with us!

But back to the narrative: Albert's cousin Cathy came back a while after Albert and his mother, with a different story. "My father says I can come, because he don't care about me, but the boys gotta go to public school and learn somethin'." She had already taken them back to their school, where she had been supposed to bring them in the first place. How their father *knew* the boys wouldn't learn anything in our school seems a bit mysterious to me. Perhaps he believed that if you hated school, that was a sure sign it was a good one, and if you didn't learn there, then that just showed your cussedness, or your stupidity. In other words, within his lights, he was being a conscientious father! The fact that Earl and Joey would play truant every time they dared and would come to us (which meant one of us, usually me, trudging with them all the way

back to their school, knocking on the classroom door - they were in the same "special ed" class - having the sour-faced guard - oops, I mean, teacher - unlock it and greet them with exasperation, shooting a resentful look at me, as though I were responsible for their evil conduct) meant nothing to him except to confirm his belief in their criminality. And Joey has in fact spent most of his young adult life in prison for various crimes. Earl, Cathy informed me, "had a rubber hose up his ass and would die if he got kicked," which I took to mean he had had his colon or rectum resected for ulcerative colitis. At any rate, this seems to have kept him docile and law-abiding, even though he too has never learned to read, let alone find a job. He lives with Cathy and has indeed become a "lost boy."

It has been sad, though, watching Joey change from an angelic-looking boy with light brown skin and curls and a wistful look in his eye to a sullen, hate-filled criminal who eyes you cynically, when he bothers to acknowledge you at all. Joey's trouble is that he's not dumb enough to accept his fate! His native wit rebels. It is appalling to me to see his sad, intelligent spirit imprisoned in that ugly body and mind. No, Cathy never learned to read, either, but she did find out who her friends were. She has six children, now, at the age of twenty-eight, and for several years, would bring them to us, one by one, as they reached the age of three. Repeated pregnancy and child-rearing have taken their toll of her appetite for motherhood, alas, and she finally took her four away from us when the oldest two, who adore their father, began wetting their beds and in other ways behaving badly at home after he

left finally and for good, and we took his side in wanting regular visitation rights - but at least the three oldest are still "ours," and will be all right, we hope and believe. Cathy does have an instinct for finding good men to father her children, and the present one, who is father to the two youngest, really seems to care for the entire brood, even though his hand is sometimes too heavy. We stay in touch.

But this is still in the future, and my narrative is of the past. The new families proved a problem far greater than the new children. One father, Leroy, was an assistant professor of psychology from the university newly married to a young widow with three children, the oldest of which was our student. This man was determined to assert his parental authority - with this boy in particular. It was clear that he believed that Danny had been spoiled by his mother. He had considerable skepticism about the nature of our school to begin with, and as his PhD thesis was on the subject of non-violence and we were located in the ghetto, Leroy was prone to seeing violence everywhere.

His interventions, or efforts to intervene, in our school policy of encouraging children to work out their own solutions to interpersonal problems via a council meeting system of self-governance as well as by other problem-solving devices which did not prevent violence as such but taught them how to handle problems which left unsolved would have led to violence, struck us as authoritarian in impact, as our policies struck him, evidently, as anarchical.

Parent meetings began to acquire the characteristics of a

battleground, with factions lining up pro and con school personnel and policies, but mostly con. It was an uncomfortable time, and its effect on the school was to cause those of us who were actually at school from day to day to decide to adopt a policy of permitting only those who were actually involved in being there to make rules as to how we could or should do things. Any parent who chose to be there would automatically be a part of that decision-making process, but other parents could only request, advise or suggest, but not demand or direct. It was our first real move toward absolute internal autonomy, and is still in effect. I still believe it is the only possible way we could have managed things in such a way as to make them work, but the cost in loss of families was great at the time. All but four of them withdrew their kids at the end of the school year.

But this division was only the beginning of our troubles! The other new family was a divorced wife and her son Robby. Susan was living with a black militant, still a *big* no-no in our society, at least for middle-class families - and even now, I believe, grounds for loss of custody of a woman's child with most family court judges. We got caught in the midst of the custody battle for control of where Robby would live and go to school. His father, a pathologist at the local medical school, had as his lawyer a former city court judge who elected to focus on our school as the second grounds for his client's custody of Robby, the first, of course, being his client's ex-wife's sexual preferences.

The first thing we knew about this was when we were visited, in rapid succession, by an attorney from the office of

Dylan

corporation counsel for the city, the chief of the fire department, an official from the building department, and a man from the county health department. One after another, these officials told us that we would be summarily shut down, some unless we complied with their requirements, others, just shut down, period. I must admit, we felt pretty alarmed, called an emergency meeting of parents, and began frantically trying to find out what, if anything, we could do to meet the situation.

Then the children got into the act. I guess that was my fault. I had felt badly crowded by the threat and had decided to bring out our big guns. I told the kids what was going on, in pretty colorful terms - and they decided to set up a picket line outside the school protesting the unfairness of the city. Then I called in the media. The signs made by the kids were most eloquent, and the photographers had a "human interest" field day - for which, read fair game for taking pot-shots at the city government. Reporters and picture-takers from both newspapers and all three TV channels swarmed, and we were a short term sensation for the silly season.

It was a stand-off. At the mayor's press conference every week, Herb Starr from Channel Six would ask him, "Well, have you closed The Free School down yet?" And he would answer, "I'm looking into it." The building department assigned us a permanent "advisor." It seems even our fire escape was illegal, lacking a platform at the top.

But...we weren't closed down. We made some changes, did some housekeeping, and let a lot of people know that we took

their comments seriously. And gradually, the heat subsided. I made an appointment to talk with the mayor. He was *very* understanding, but made it *very* clear how much he deplored my having used the weapon of publicity. I was *very* apologetic and contrite. It was a real father-daughter scene. I think he was quite relieved to have us off his back.

So ended our first exciting year of the "official" school. Toward the end of the school year we had finally received our tax-exempt status from Internal Revenue, and since this had been reputed to be an extremely difficult feat to accomplish - and I had done it without legal representation or even setting up a corporation - I felt elated. Our funding problem was still an acute one, and I believed that having tax-exempt status would encourage people to donate money to us. The same mother who had helped me to find our building, Carol, and I now took on the task of seeking out a grant or grants to help us solve this problem. She and her husband David together wrote out a series of eloquent grant proposals and sent them to several corporations reputed to have given money to other schools like ours. We got back a sheaf of polite and encouraging "no's".

It was very clear to all of us by now that our present building would not be suitable for occupancy the following year, and so, we set out to find a replacement. Quite early in the summer we located an ideal one, not far away, in the old Italian section of the south end, currently occupied by an Italian Catholic War Veterans' Post, and, historically, an Italian language parochial school, and before that, a

German-language church! The building department would be ecstatic, we knew, and so would we if we could get it at a price we could afford. My first attempt to raise this money, or enough of it for a mortgage, was to write a small grant proposal to three local millionaires who had expressed an interest in the families living in the inner city. I was inspired to do this on reflecting that I had met two of them personally, and had heard from our teacher Kathy of the reputation for benevolence of the third, who was a friend of her father's and the owner of an electrical contracting firm which occasionally hired ghetto black adolescents. One of the other two I had met during a brief lecture series my philosophy professor husband had given at a nearby summer "Chautauqua" focused on the role of science in society. This man, a highly successful contractor who had put up many of the new downtown buildings in Albany and was well-known as a patron of the arts locally, had wined and dined us both at his sumptuous home in the posh new-money section of the city, and was reputed to be both enlightened and humane.

The other, a lawyer from Troy (across the river from us) owned rental houses in the south end of Albany and was said to have a kindly interest in the "children of the ghetto," (presumably when he wasn't evicting tenants for protesting against his slumlord policies - although, to give him his due, he was by no means the worst of the absentee landlords, and was liked by most of his tenants!). Actually, he had come into our first school one day bringing us a box of second-hand *Cherry Ames* books, but had

expressed disappointment at not seeing more black faces among the children. I believe we had only one really black face at that time - Gary - although we had two light brown ones (one of them Telly) and one white one that masked *black blood* (shudder) - Cathy! But he was expecting shoe polish black, not interracial suntan. His "disappointment" was actually a twin of our own - or at least, of Bruce's and mine. We had only begun to learn that poor black parents are the most exacting of all groups in judging the potential usefulness of a school in money and status terms, and so, shunned ours as "dirty hippy."

It makes perfect sense that this should be the case, when you think of it. These parents know full well from their own experience (mostly in the South) with inferior all-black schooling in dilapidated housing that such institutions do not attract the truly gifted teachers needed to educate their children. And at least, the public schools exhibit good, middle-class values and offer skills which can, theoretically, offer a way out of poverty and ignorance. In this view, if their children fail to learn, it shows either that the teachers are prejudiced and hence, are discriminating against their children (which is often the case!) or that their children themselves are responsible for their own failure, which leaves the family helpless to remedy the situation except by punishing their children, or by tutoring them, a solution not accessible to illiterate parents. Much the more comfortable belief of the two, as well as the most statistically prevalent one, is the race-class prejudice one, which, alas, often leads to the result of working to bring about the very

thing it believes in, teachers and principals being human like the rest of us. The working-class parents who feel comfortable with us all too often appear to feel instinctively that we must not know our business, and that for a school to instill middle-class values in a child, it must reflect those values, and hence, feel uncomfortable to those parents! Or so I gradually came to believe.

We were thus coming up against the "catch-22" aspect of the widely-held belief about money and status in the society which defeats everyone who is at the bottom of the heap. The general belief in our capitalist system is that you have to *have* (money, success, status) to *get* (money, success, status), and it is the way most capitalist institutions, such as banks, operate. Well, that belief is true of schooling as well, and has kept us from being more relevant than we are to working class families.

This was a paradox we were to encounter time and again in the history of our school, and it is one which I believe has defeated most innovative institutions in our society which focus on working to resolve some of the class and race problems that plague our country. Although, come to think of it, the phenomenon is not limited to working-class families, but is widely held to be true a great many middle-class families as well. We've always had a limited appeal to upwardly mobile families of whatever class, for the same reason - that they fear that their children will not enter the high-income level group they see as essential to acceptance in American society. It's a matter of values. Equating income level with freedom of choice creates strange ideological bed-fellows! Over the period

(twenty-one years) of our school's existence we have seen as clearly as Neill did that the end result of attendance at The Free School creates an outlook which allows our graduates to choose innovatively how they wish to make their living, but it's hard to convince parents who have not experienced this personally that it can happen to their kids. Still - the number we have gotten and do get is a testimonial to the continued existence of a number of independent-minded families who have seen through the illusion of the "American Dream." We are still in business, still thriving, in the midst of the Reagan-Bush regressive economic razzle-dazzle.

To be continued.

Mary Leue, mother of five, graduate of Bryn Mawr College and the Children's Hospital of Nursing in Boston, Mass., teacher and midwife, is the founder and director emeritus of The Free School and the editor/publisher of ΣΚΟΛΕ. This article was originally written in 1973, only slightly edited since that time.

BUDDING AUTHORS SECTION:
Two poems written by a talented, delightful little girl of more than eighty years ago:

TO A RED ROSE
by Josephine Blatt Pall
(age six)

Dear Rose will you open?
Come out of your bed.
Put on your green dress
And your bonnet of red.
The robin is calling.
The Bluebird is here.
Dear rose will you open?
Now summere is here.
The other dear flowers,
They open quite soon.
But cunning, dear rosebud,
You open in June.

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FRIENDS
(age fifteen)

I have sat up long hours with night
Gripping his black hand in my own,
Watching him make the stars less bright,
Whittle the hours to a bone.

Silent we sit as aged men
Beneath the friendly village tree.
Who, knowing they will not meet again
Wear not each other's company.

Always in just the same old way
He waits at my brief slumber's end
And nods to me as if to say
"Are you awake? Hello, my friend."

No longer do I bid him go
Who find him when I look for rest
Or shun his waiting presence--no,
He is my friend, my welcome guest.

And stepping softly, hand in hand
We walk his watch, at every bell.
He turns the hourglass of sand
And smiling, whispers, "All is well."

MONTANA NOTES 4/30- 5/9, 1990
by Jenifer Goldman

I had never even seen the outside of an AMTRACK train, except on a commercial. When I went inside, I explored the train for a while, and it's really amazing. They have a restaurant, the dining car, and it's almost like Bob's Big Boys, or something. The food is pretty good, and there's some really nice people. There's a lounge car where you can go to play cards, or buy snacks at the snack bar. On the Western train, they show movies each night in the lounge car. Some of the movies were "Uncle Buck", "Bat Man", "Cookie", "When Harry Met Sally", and they showed one of the old cartoons, "Tom Cat." The Eastern trains are pretty small, but the Western trains are huge double deckers, and they're a lot more fancy. They don't show movies on the Eastern trains, but the Eastern trains are still comfortable to sleep in.

It was pretty comfortable to sleep on the train, although you had to sleep sitting up. The seats leaned back, but not very far. The only trouble with the Western trains is that they had a bar between the seats, so that, even if you got a double-seater, you had to put up with a bar on your back when you tried to lay down.

Some of the things we studied on the train were geography, studying the states that we traveled through on the train, math work book (Jerry [Uncle Jerry Mintz, ed.] helped me work on multiplying fractions, symmetry, and volume). In current events, we looked in the paper and read articles about *apartheid* in South Africa, Mohawk

Indian History (the gambling problem on the Reservation - I read some of it, so it was also reading). Jerry taught me a card game called "Pig", and he counts it as a lesson in observation, because when someone gets four of the same cards, they touch their nose, and you have to notice it first. We worked on vocabulary and spelling - we did crossword puzzles, about five of them. We did economics, looking in the stock market - Jerry had bought stock in *Telephono de Mexico*, which is a Mexican telephone company. I learned how to look up the stock. I read some things in the "Unusual Origins of Everyday Things" book, about superstitions, such as black cats, "knock on wood" , crossed fingers, "God bless you", sneezes, hot dogs, and wedding rings. In current events, we also read about how bears are being threatened, being hunted for their claws and their gall bladders, that the Japanese treasure dearly. We read about "Chorus Line", and its last production, which was also economics because we talked about how much money it took in. That night I took my "New Kids" book and read for a while. So, you see, in the first two days of the trip we did quite a lot, while we were on the train.

We got to Whitefish (Montana) on Wednesday, about midnight. Then we had to get driven down to Missoula. By the time we arrived there is was about three o' clock in the morning.

That morning, I got introduced to two of the four boys that lived there, Caleb and Nathan. Jerry went to a newspaper interview, but I chose not to come with him, because I wanted to stay back and get used to the place. Then we went to visit Sussex, the alternative

school there. There were 325 people on the waiting list, and we had to organize another school to put them in. So we went to see Sussex to see how they did it there. I thought it was pretty nice, and the kids showed interest in the things they were doing.

When we were at Sussex, Jerry introduced me to a third boy from the family that we were staying with, Jonah. He doesn't go to Sussex. His father just picked him up and brought him there.

I talked to some of the kids that went to Sussex, and I went inside and talked to one of the teachers. I thought that the teacher seemed pretty nice and pretty generous to the kids. At that point of the day she was having the kids come in, teaching them spin art. A little later we went outside, and there was a guy who was teaching Russian to some of the kids. He was sitting up on the jungle gym, so we sat on the tires and listened in for a while. It was pretty interesting. He was telling Russian folk tales and teaching some Russian words. While I was doing at that, Jerry was inside teaching a class to the kids.

Jerry had a meeting that night, but I decided not to go because there was not going to be many other kids there. I saw a little bit of the video, and it looked like the meeting went pretty well. There were quite a few people. There were at least a hundred, or maybe even more. The purpose of the meeting was to see who was interested in starting a new school.

The next day we went to a nearby park, where they were having a homeschoolers meeting. They had a spelling bee, and I entered in the 5th-8th grade contest. I messed up on my sixth word.

I don't remember what the word was, but I remember that the reason why I messed up was because I said "ou" and it was only supposed to be "o".

That night we had the first meeting of the people who were really interested in starting a school. It was at a church that said that they would let us meet there. The first thing that Jerry did was call the children up to the front of the room, and we formed a circle. We were going to attempt to have the first meeting of the new school.

I was the chairperson, and the girl sitting across from me kept the log. I thought that the meeting went pretty well, considering that it was the first meeting, and the kids didn't even know each other.

We talked about "rules" and "interests", and "parental supervision." We decided on a new way to vote. That was my idea: Two thirds of the people would have to vote on something in order for it to pass, like majority, but it had to be higher than majority. Also, the others, the minority, if they felt strongly enough, could call a re-vote. And that passed.

After that, we talked about what kids were interested in, and what they wanted to learn. A lot of kids were interested in math. Some of them said "recess". One of the kids was relating everything to his public school, and trying to make everything like his public school. So I asked him why he was relating everything to his public school, and not what he felt and he wanted. He said, "That's the only thing I have to relate it to."

We adjourned the meeting to the next day, and the kids all

went outside to play, while they showed a video to the adults ("Why do These Kids Love School?") and talked.

The next morning, we had the other meeting, which was really a continuation of the first one. Before the meeting, the kids were all outside playing while the adults talked. One of the kids climbed up on the roof. Some other kids climbed trees, and I was one of them. That was the only thing that there was to do. Then Jerry came out and saw the kid on the roof and told him to get down, and it was time to have the meeting.

We went inside to the meeting. There was a big circle of chairs in the front of the room: all the kids got in that, and a circle around for the adults.

The meeting started. We continued the same agenda that we started at the last meeting. One of the kids brought up consensus, but it didn't pass.

Another thing on the agenda that Jerry had added was "roof". The kid who was up on the roof earlier looked at him with a strange look. He was the log keeper at that point. He turned around and looked at me and said, "What is that supposed to mean?" He was hoping that it didn't mean what he thought it did. So I told him to move it down from the last thing on the list down to the second thing, so that we could get it over with.

We had a long discussion about that and finally decided that we wouldn't be allowed on the roof. Then, another kid brought up "climbing trees", because he didn't think that the church would like it, and if someone got hurt, the church would have to pay. At that

point I thought he was the stupidest and the worst kid in the world. At first, I kept on objecting to not being allowed to climb on the trees, which was what he brought up. Then Jerry looked at me with this funny look, and in the last vote I abstained, because we had decided that me and the other kids who wanted to climb trees could go down to the park, and we could climb trees there. After the meeting, Jerry said, "At least you abstained. Because I would have been upset if you objected." Later on, we did go to the park and climb trees.

When we came back a little later, Jerry pulled us aside in a little room, and all the kids went in, and we tried to decide on a name for the school. We came up with a lot of things like "Bitterroot, Grizzly Bear, Ponderosa, and Shiny Mountain. Then we went out into the big meeting, with the adults included. The adults put about thirty two other names into it. One of the people asked the eight year old kid who thought of the name why he put out "Shiny Mountain". He said, "Because that is one of the nick-names of the state." So someone said, well if that's what it is, it should be "Shin*ing* mountain, rather than Shin*y* Mountain. The boy said he had no objections to making the change. The we voted on all of the names, got it down to ten, and then to four. Finally, we had the last two, which were Ponderosa and Shining Mountain. After the kid explained why he liked the name, a lot of the people changed their mind and started to like that, and finally, Shining Mountain won! So now the name of the school is going to be Shining Mountain School. Hopefully, it will be starting this fall.

After the meeting, Jerry's friend Jerry came to pick us up in a pick-up truck. He used to work at Jerry's school. He took us to his house in Stevensville, where he has 130 acres of property. We met his wife, Lisa, and their one year old daughter, and their twelve year old son, William. He LIKES to be called William. Most people never call me by my full name unless they're angry at me.

Jerry Nichols writes legal papers to save the trees. He stops people from cutting down large areas of trees in the wilderness areas. On the way to his house, he took us to a wildlife preserve, where we saw a lot of deer.

The next morning I took a walk into the hills with William. We saw a magpie nest. It had four babies in it.

Later on, before we were going to leave, we went down in a big Jeep called Frankenstein to see a neighbor. William showed me a tree where he had shot a porcupine, and we finally found the dead body. It smelled. Then we walked a little ways away, and we saw an old dried up well. We wanted to see how deep it was. So we took a small rock and dropped it down, and it took about five seconds to reach bottom. Then we found this really long rubber tube, held on to one end and put the other end down the well, and it still didn't reach bottom (Jerry told us later we could figure out how deep it was by using the formula for how fast it goes - 32 feet per second per second, and how long it took to hit bottom.) .

Then Lisa drove us back to Missoula, and William went with us for the ride.

The next day, we went back to Sussex School again and

Jerry talked to the class. We did a question class, which is where you say any question that you want to know the answer to, no matter how stupid it is. One of the questions that Jerry told us some kid said was, "Do fish fart?" I thought that was pretty funny. Some kids asked questions like, "Do *déja vus* really happen and why? One of the ones we wound up discussing was, "What is beyond space?" Jerry started explaining Einstein's theory -$E=MC^2$. I thought it was pretty interesting, especially the part about time slowing down as you get faster.

In the afternoon we went to see Jonah's school, which was St. Joseph's Catholic School (Jonah is the oldest boy in the family that we stayed with. He is almost 10.). We showed a couple of videos.

The next morning we went to Clark's Fork School, which is where Stevie went to school. He was the youngest in the family, which I forgot to mention. He is four and a half. It is an alternative school for kids in pre-school and kindergarten. It was a nice school. They had a hamster and a rabbit. I was watching some kids in one room, and Jerry went into the other room. The kids that I was watching were naming things in the picture that they saw, matching things that they put on one paper, and using stickers to duplicate the thing on another paper.

A woman who was interested in teaching at the new school came to pick us up, to bring us where we were going to stay that night, which was in Kalaispiel, which was near the train station. We needed to get close to the train station, because the train was going

to leave at five in the morning.

On the way up we stopped at the Flathead Indian Reservation, to look at a shop, and to go into a "casino," where we played a couple of games.

When we got to the house where we were going to stay, there were a couple of kids living there: Josh and Maria. They used to be home schoolers, but not any more. Now they go to public school.

We got up early the next morning and went to the train station. The train was two hours late. So we got on the train. There's not much to say until we got to the last night. The last night we met two kids. They were brother and sister, about thirteen and sixteen. They were traveling on their own, going to see their grandparents. We played games and talked and ate until two in the morning. I don't think they would have been up until two if their parents were there. We decided to stay up because we could sleep late the next morning.

The next afternoon we arrived in Philadelphia station, two hours late. They said we had twenty minutes in the station, so we decided to get off the train to get a snack and make a phone call. We came back in about fifteen minutes, and the train was gone. When we found out that the train had left, our first reaction was, "Oh, no! What are we going to do now?" Our baggage was on the train that we were supposed to be on, going to New York. I wished we could say the same for ourselves.

We went to ask the people at the information booth what we

should do. They said that there was another train leaving for New York soon, and they could write us a pass so we could get on it.

We found the train and got on. That train wound up in New York just in time to catch the other train that had our luggage before it left Penn Station. We had people make calls on their walkie-talkies to find out what track our original train was on. As soon as we got there we hurried to the track. We found the train. They had moved our luggage out to the hall in the train. Fortunately all of our luggage was there. Out of all that we learned that if your train is running late, don't get off!

I thought this trip was a good experience, especially helping people start a new school.

Jeni Goldman is Jerry Mintz's niece, with whom he has been privileged to conduct homeschooling for the last year or so. Jerry acknowledges having acted as Jeni's interviewer, amanuensis and editor, but the words of the narrative are entirely hers. She and her uncle are collaborating on a book based on their travels and experiences together.

JULIA AND THE PIXIETAIL PRINCESS
by Elizabeth Biberman, age six

Once upon a time there was a girl named Julia. She spent lots of time in talking with her mother. The next morning when she woke up there was a rainbow outside her back door. She wanted to go out and see it. Her mother told she couldn't. Her mother said she was going to take a rest, so she did, and she fell asleep.

So Julia snuck outside, without waking her mother up, and looked at the rainbow. She wanted to climb the rainbow, so she put her hand on and she started to climb, dup, dup, dup, dup, and when she got to the top of the rainbow, she saw a strange looking comb on the top. She stared at it. She stared and stared and stared, and then she picked up the comb. And then a bunny rabbit, an unidentified bunny rabbit, appeared where the comb was. The rabbit said, "What are you doing with my comb?" Julia said, "Hmm," and she thought for a minute. She thought for another and another and another and she said, "Oh, I'm just looking at it." And then she looked around her and there was a car. A pretty, sunshine car. The little bunny rabbit was sitting at the driving place and started to drive. She turned the steering wheel and the car went up.

The car went up and up and up and up and then it landed on a cloud. The car stopped and the Pixietails pulled Julia out of the car. They pulled her in the palace, pulled her to the queen. The palace was the Pixietail Palace on top of the clouds.

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The Pixietail queen asked the bunny rabbit, "Who did you bring today?" The rabbit said, "A little girl." "What's her name?" "I don't know. She didn't tell me yet." "Why don't you ask her?" And so the bunny rabbit asked. So the little bunny rabbit finally knew what it was and told the Pixietail queen. And the little bunny rabbit said in a teensy tinesy voice, "Her name is Julia."

The Pixietail queen said, "Let me lead you to my princesses. You'll like the baby one. It's the most wonderfullest in the whole palace."

So Julia followed the Pixietail queen. She walked and walked and walked and walked until she came to the first Pixietail princess' room, and she peeked inside the window. Then she walked a little more and she came to the second one. She peeked through the window again. The she saw the third with the little baby, and it was the last one. She peeked in, and said, "Hello," with her teensiest voice, like a Pixietail. (I'm in this story. I'm supposed to be the little baby Elizabeth.) And they liked her there, so Julia and the Pixietails lived happily together in the palace ever after.

Elizabeth Biberman is a new contributor to the journal. Her father Jerry was kind enough to send us her story on tape, plus a written transcription, since Elizabeth hasn't yet mastered word processing. We're sorry you can only read it, not also hear it in her remarkable tones. We are hoping for many more wonderful "pixie tales" from Elizabeth.

REPRINTS:

NEW VIEWS OF HUMAN INTELLIGENCE -
A far broader range of important skills and abilities emerges.

by Marie Winn

Howard Gardner says he is trying to "shake things up and pluralize things a bit."

- A narrow idea of intelligence misleads some children into thinking they are stupid.

THE SEVEN TYPES OF INTELLIGENCE:

•LINGUISTIC
•INTRAPERSONAL
•LOGICAL MATHEMATICAL
• MUSICAL
• INTERPERSONAL
•SPATIAL
•BODILY—KINESTHETIC

INTELLIGENCE—the dark secret of American social science and education is coming out of the closet. Once intelligence was perceived as a narrow group of mental abilities, those measurable by an IQ test. But according to that view great groups of the population turned out to be not very smart or educable. Since these groups were generally composed of poor minorities, nobody liked to talk about intelligence very much—it seemed somehow un-American. In recent years a new definition of intelligence has been gaining acceptance, one which includes a far greater range of mental

abilities among the components of human cognition. This conceptual change foreshadows the most far-reaching social and educational consequences.

The idea that intelligence is a single thing, a kind of brain power that can be measured by a test the way electric power may be measured by a galvanometer, has informed thinking in the academic and research world for much of this century. Although French psychologist Alfred Binet, creator of the first extensively used intelligence test in 1905, saw intelligence as the exercise of a variety of mental faculties, his disciple Charles Spearman, an English psychologist, added a principle that soon became widely accepted: there is a single factor common to all these diverse functions. He called this factor "general intelligence" and symbolized it with a lower-case g. All cognitive activity, Spearman proposed, required access to that g factor.

While there was always dispute, sometimes violent disagreement, about whether this factor is basically innate or more or less susceptible to environmental influence, psychologists after Spearman continued to believe in the g factor and worked to create new and better tests to measure it. In 1912 William Stern, a German psychologist, invented the concept of the intelligence quotient, which divided the "mental age" of a person (as discovered through a test) by the chronological age, thereby coming up with a fraction. Four years later, when Stanford University psychologist Lewis Madison Terman came up with an American version of Binet's test that came to be known as the Stanford-Binet—he multiplied the final

result by 100, to avoid the fraction—the stage was set for large-scale intelligence testing throughout America.

Yet a curious and strangely neglected fact about IQ tests serves to cast doubt on their reliability as a measure of intelligence. While these scores do predict success in school fairly well, there little correlation between how people score on IQ tests and their later success in life. The numbers of people with undistinguished childhood IQ scores who excel In later life, as well as the numbers of certified "geniuses" who come to naught, are legion. Clearly, what the standard IQ test measures is but a small part of the complex conglomeration of elements that make up human intelligence, a part that may not have much to do with those cognitive abilities that allow people to function successfully In various walks of life.

Today the g factor concept of intelligence no longer dominates scientific discussion. In its place is a far more pluralistic view. According to John L Horn, a psychologist at the University of Southern California, "What we see as intelligence, and tend to regard as a whole, is in fact a mosaic of many distinct units. "

Robert J. Sternberg, a psychologist at Yale, has constructed a "triarchic" theory of human intelligence, which focuses on such areas as common sense and insight. J. P. Guilford, a California psychologist has classified intellectual acts into 120 categories, while one researcher at a recent meeting of psychologists suggested that humans might have as many as 80,000 intellectual abilities.

By far the most intuitively satisfying of the current approaches is Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, or

M.I. theory. Gardner, a psychologist and recipient of a MacArthur Foundation "genius" award, runs a research institution at Harvard Graduate School of Education named Project Zero which is a fertile testing ground for many of his ideas .Using data from such diverse sources as neurology, anthropology, psychology and pathology, Gardner has come up with seven areas of intellectual competence—intelligences he calls them—that are relatively independent of one another. A summary of the seven areas, the "end-states" or careers they might lead to and a prominent person proposed by Gardner to exemplify each type of intelligence, follows.

1. Linguistic - sensitivity to the meaning and order of words; poet, translator (T S Eliot)
2. Logical-mathematical - the ability to handle chains of reasoning and to recognize patterns and order; mathematician, scientist (Einstein)
3. Musical - sensitivity to pitch, melody, rhythm and tone; composer, singer (Stravinsky)
4. Bodily-kinesthetic - the ability to use the body skillfully and handle objects adroitly; athlete, dancer, surgeon (Martha Graham)
5. Spatial - the ability to perceive the world accurately and to recreate or transform aspects of that world; sculptor, architect surveyor (Picasso)
6. Interpersonal - the ability to understand people and relationships; politician, salesman, religious leader (Gandhi)
7. Intrapersonal - access to one's emotional life, the means to understand oneself and others; therapist, social worker (Freud)

In his highly regarded book *Frames of Mind* Gardner goes beyond the theoretical by providing psychological evidence that each of the seven intelligences exists as a discrete entity. It is this body of

material, based on his own research in neuropsychology at the Boston Veterans Administration Medical Center, that lends the theory its strongest credence.

Gardner provides numerous examples of patients who have lost all language abilities as a result of damage to the speech centers in the left hemisphere of the brain, who nevertheless retain the ability to be musicians, visual artists, even engineers. Most musical abilities appear to be located in the right hemisphere, and thus injuries to the right frontal and temporal lobes cause difficulties in distinguishing tones. He points out that lesions in certain areas of the left hemisphere dramatically affect logical and mathematical abilities.

To buttress his claim for separate bodily/kinesthetic intelligence, Gardner describes patients whose linguistic and logical capacities have been devastated, but who show little or no difficulty in carrying out complicated motor activities. He cites numerous case histories of patients with right hemisphere injuries who have difficulties with spatial representation and other visual tasks; meanwhile, their linguistic abilities remain intact.

Even for the elusive personal intelligences, there is supporting neurological data. While lobotomy causes little damage to those intellectual abilities measured on an IQ test, the ruinous impact of this surgical procedure on various aspects of the personality is well known.

"I started out thinking that intelligence would break down according to the senses—visual, auditory and so on," Gardner said

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in a recent interview, "but my study convinced me it didn't work that way. My methodological principle is to look at the mind through a lot of lenses—development, breakdown, cross-cultural material, evolutionary data. And these different lenses all support the existence of multiple intelligences."

Since the publication of *Frames of Mind* in 1983, Gardner's theory has attracted extraordinary attention from both the academic world and the education establishment. A symposium on M.I. theory held last year at the University of South Carolina was attended by scholars from across the country. Educational journals regularly feature articles on Gardner's ideas. But the most unexpected testing ground for his theoretical work materialized in the fall of 1985, when eight Indiana schoolteachers approached Gardner with an audacious plan to start a public school based on the theory of multiple intelligences.

ON SEPTEMBER 8, 1989, 150 students arrived at a nondescript building in downtown Indianapolis to take part in a unique educational experiment: a school devised to develop the wide gamut of intelligences identified in Gardner's M.I.theory. What made this theory so attractive to the eight founding teachers was Gardner's belief that while everyone is born with certain strengths and weaknesses in each of the cognitive areas, all people are capable of developing greater proficiency in *all* of them.

The Key School, as it was named, covers a rigorous curriculum devoted to the three R's. This is required by Indiana law, which also mandates periodic standardized testing of all students in

these subjects. In a traditional school that would pretty much sum it up. But at the Key School the daily schedule of every child also includes music, art and physical education—four times the exposure children usually get to these subjects. And every day there is instruction in Spanish and computers (Federal "magnet" funds have allowed the school to hire eight additional teachers.) A detailed report card evaluates each child in the seven intelligences and provides a far more precise profile of his or her abilities than a conventional report card.

In Room 25 one day last winter, 22 highly concentrated little violinists are eagerly honing their musical intelligence to the tune (or somewhere vaguely near it) of "Frosty the Snowman." In Room 15 teacher Beverly Hoeltke is on the floor, surrounded by a noisy but disciplined group of first, second and third graders exercising their logical-mathematical intelligence. By moving small blocks into circles of varying sizes they are discovering the deeper connections between addition and multiplication: four plus four ends up with the same result as four times two.

In Room 17 Carol Forbes is demonstrating the difference between a small triangle and a large circle—in Spanish—a lesson that combines exercise in both the linguistic and spatial intelligences. In the gym a noisy bunch of kids are playing backboard dodgeball, little realizing, as they gleefully try to bean one another with a large ball, that they are developing their bodily-kinesthetic intelligence.

Intelligences run amok in Room 10 where a two-month-long schoolwide effort has produced a spectacular recreation of a tropical

rain forest. Wildly colorful papier-maché birds of paradise, parrots and butterflies stare down from the forest canopy at pumas and various primates, which in turn gaze down upon the exotic denizens of the forest floor.

In addition to this splendid manifestation of spatial intelligence, there are charts, graphs and carefully researched reports pinned to the wall giving information on creatures as diverse as tuataras, golden eagles and toucans, demonstrating that the linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences have not been neglected. The cooperative nature of the project attests to the involvement of the two personal intelligences. Meanwhile, a high level of musical intelligence is revealed in the taped background music, a composition called "Train in the Tropical Forest" written and performed by three upper- graders. It is a remarkable work, filled with unconventional sound effects reminiscent of the composer George Crumb.

It is hard to remember that this is not a special school for gifted children, but one whose racially and ethnically diverse population is chosen entirely by lottery, with more than a third of the students qualifying for free or reduced-price school lunch.

In its third year of operation, the Key School shows every sign of being a runaway success. Scores on standardized tests show that the two intelligences most valued in our educational system are thriving. Only five children in the entire school failed to reach the acceptable level mandated by the school district. Principal Patricia Bolanos also reports: "The test scores reveal that we are diminishing

the gap between the achievement levels of our black students and our white students, and it certainly is not because the achievement levels of the white students are diminishing."

Parental enthusiasm, always a litmus test of a school's well-being, is high. "I can't say enough good things about the Key School," says Marilyn Altom, mother of Crystal, who graduated last year, and Alexandra, a second grader. Art teacher Kathy Ann Calwell says, "Crystal Altom was a child who definitely could have been lost in the cracks. She wasn't good in spelling or math or any of the academic areas. But she just flowered, right before our eyes. And in the process of growing confident about her art and music and theater, the other areas got stronger."

IN RECENT YEARS HOWARD Gardner's attention has moved from establishing the multiple intelligences to the more practical area of testing. With David Henry Feldman, a psychologist at Tufts University, he is involved in Project Spectrum, an assessment program that measures a far greater range of abilities than IQ tests do. Indeed, it has been designed to touch on all of the seven intelligences. Spectrum evaluates a child's skill over a period of time in the familiar environment of the class-room, and gives a written report on his or her strengths and weaknesses. It is already in use at the Healey School in Somerville, Mass.

The Educational Testing Service, the very institution that administers some of the nation's most widely used standardized tests, has begun to acknowledge the need for change. Drew H. Gitomer, a research scientist at E.T.S., says "There's a growing

recognition that the traditional assessments don't accomplish all that can be done and in certain ways work against educational objectives." E.T.S. is collaborating with Gardner on another alternative assessment program, Arts Propel, which is developing new ways to evaluate children's work in the arts in a number of Pittsburgh public schools.

As the education establishment faces the need for reform, Gardner's ideas are frequently cited. The Education Commission of the States, which serves as a policy resource for the nation's governors, finds his work a promising model. Rexford Brown, the commission's director of communications, says, "Gardner's work has been important in attacking the monolithic notion of intelligence that has undergirded much of our thinking. We are beginning to see that education is not meant merely to sort out a few children and make them leaders, but to develop the latent talents of the entire population in diverse way."

Gardner's ideas are not without their critics. Sandra Scarr, a professor of psychology at the University of Virginia, looks on M.I. theory as an example of "faulty optimism that leads to dead ends in both theory and practice." She calls it a "lumper theory in which everything good in human behavior is called intelligence."

Robert Sternberg of Yale observes that a person deficient in one of Gardner's cognitive areas, music intelligence, for example, is not thereby mentally impaired in the way a person lacking in verbal or reasoning skills would be. Sternberg describes Gardner's theory as "a theory of talents, not one of intelligence." He explains, "An

ability is a component of intelligence when we cannot get along *without it, and a talent when we are* not noticeably handicapped by its absence."

Nor is everyone in the education establishment sanguine about Gardner's influence. Chester E. Finn, chairman of the board of governors of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a Federal testing program, sees this influence as both "good and bad." "The good part," he says, "is the perception that people who aren't very good at one thing can be very good at another and that there are multiple ways of evaluating performance of any given task.

"But his ideas can be turned to ill effect," he continues. "You hear people saying it's all right if kids don't get the right answer as long as they're creative in their approach. But is that good? I firmly believe that every young American ought to have some idea of who Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln are, and I don't care whether their greatest strength is playing the ukelele or skating backward on the ice."

In his latest book, *To Open Minds*, Howard Gardner defends himself against such critics, and expresses a respect for tradition and basic skill development together with the encouragement of creativity in the classroom. As he concluded an interview in his office at Project Zero, he emphasized the value of a more humanistic view of intelligence. "I believe that as long as we have a narrow definition of intelligence—a very scholastic definition—most kids are going to think they're stupid, and they're going to miss the fact that they may have a lot of abilities that could be important

vocationally and avocationally. Enlarging the concept of intelligence, and realizing that people may not have the school intelligence but may have other equally important ones—I think that would be an enormously valuable thing to happen."

Gardner pauses and then adds with a smile, "M.I.theory is not the last word. I'm trying to shake things up and pluralize things a bit. To think that there is a last word is what's wrong with most intelligence theorists."

Marie Winn, author of *The Plug-In Drug,* writes regularly about child development. Reprinted from *THE GOOD HEALTH MAGAZINE* of the New York Times, April 29, 1990.

REPRINTS (CONT'D.):
EARTHWATCH:
SAVING WATER - Things You Can Do:
by Neal Shapiro
(from Jacques Cousteau's *Calypso Log*):

Repair leaking faucets, sprinklers, pipes, and toilets as soon as a leak is observed.

Turn off water while brushing teeth, shaving, lathering, and dishwashing.

Wash dishes or clothes in machines only when there is a full load.

Use a broom—not water—to clean sidewalks and driveways. Gardeners and building maintenance personnel should be advised not to use water when a broom is sufficient. **Wash your car on the lawn**, where possible, and NOT in the driveway or street; this also waters the lawn. Cut back the number of times you wash your car. Turn the water off during soaping. **Replace water-flow systems** that have high rates of flow with new models that use 20-80% less water. Newer models of showerheads are easily installed, use less water per minute and come with a valve to turn off the flow while lathering.

At new home or office construction sites, install **toilets** that require only 1-3 gallons of water instead of 3-7 gallons. Replace existing toilets with low-flush toilets. Some existing homes may not be able to accommodate low-flush toilets due to placement of sewer lines, but reduction devices placed in existing toilet tanks can displace some water: for example, bottles filled with sand or water, water dams, or adjustable floats and balls. CAUTION: Before installing any devices, consult your plumber or a plumbing department at a home improvement center for advice.

Gray water—water that has already been used for showers, dishwashing, laundry, or cooking—can be saved and used for garden plants, thus reducing the need for fresh tap water. With

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appropriate permits, plumbing can be slightly altered to divert gray water from the sewer and into the yard. For more information, refer to the book, *Gray Water Use in the Landscape*, by Robert Kourik, $6.00, Edible Publications, P.O. Box 1841, Santa Rosa, CA 95402, 707-874-2606. Or contact Water Cycle Company, 1038 Redwood Highway, # 1, Mill Valley, CA 94941, 415-381-7851.

Plant grass, flowers, shrubs, and trees that require less water. This strategy, called **xeriscaping or dry gardening**, favors hardier ground covers that require little or no supplementary watering.

Water is one of our most precious resources. Without it, life would be impossible. Yet around the world, and even in some of our own backyards water supplies are threatened by radioactive wastes, chemical leachate, agricultural runoff, drought, the demands of increasing human populations, and imprudent use. While many of these threats require grassroots organization and political action, individual citizens can take immediate steps to save water on a day-to-day basis.

According to some lawn-care experts, **many yards are overwatered**; if grass bounces back when stepped on, there is no need to water it. A yard which is mowed less often and cut higher, 2-3 inches, encourages grass to grow deeper roots which need less watering.

If **rain** is forecast and you were planning to water your yard or garden, wait. Chances are the rain will be sufficient and you will not have to use piped water. If it rained overnight and you were scheduled to water around the house or office, don't. Nature took care of it. Also, readjust automatic sprinklers when it has rained.

Product Sources

- Home improvement centers or plumbing and fixture suppliers.
- Resources Conservation, Inc., P.O. Box 71, Greenwich, CT 06836-0071, 203-964-0600.
- Seventh Generation, Colchester, VT 05446-1672, 800-4561177

Additional Information

• *A Citizen's Guide to Community Water Conservation,* Dept. WG, National Wildlife Federation, Water Resources Program, 1400 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 200362266.

• Conservation Program, Water Works Division, Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, 100 1st Ave, Charlestown Navy Yard, Boston, MA 02129, 617-242-SAVE.

• Worldwatch Institute, 1776 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, 202-452-1999; Worldwatch Papers, *Water: Rethinking Management in an Age of Scarcity,* #62, and *Conserving Water: The Untapped Alternative,* #67, both by Sandra Postel, $4.00 each.

Reprinted from Calypso Log, June, 1990, #19, from an environmental action guide currently being prepared by The Cousteau Society. *Calypso Log* will alert members when this guide is available for distribution.

EARTHWATCH (CONT'D.):

TREES + BETTER MILEAGE = CLEANER AIR

by Neal Shapiro
(from *Calypso Log*)

Trees are not only beautiful, they carry out many environmentally beneficial functions. They absorb carbon dioxide, the major greenhouse gas, (up to 50 pounds per tree each year) from the atmosphere and release oxygen. They retain moisture in soils, hold topsoil in place, and provide shade, cooling and food. Trees are also a renewable resource.

Planted in strategic locations around the home or office buiulding, trees can help save energy. Thc best locations are on the west and south sides of buildings. This reduces the amount of solar energy that heats structures in the summer, thereby reducing the amount of fossil fuel needed to generate electricity for air-conditioning.

According to one estimate, three mature trees planted near a house can save, in annual air-conditioning expenses, about as much as it costs to run a refrigerator for a year. The extra shade will increase home comfort for those who do not have air-conditioning.

For Christmas, buy a live tree that can be planted afterwards. If you must buy a cut tree, before throwing it away, inquire if your city has a collection system to use discarded trees for mulch. If not, donate money to plant a tree to replace the one cut for your use. For further information on a system to collect cut trees for composting contact:

• City Forester, Parks and Recreation Department, 600 River Street, Austin, TX 78701, (512) 476-6485.

• Vermont Department of Agriculture, 116 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05602, (802) 828-2416, Ms. Kate Finley-Woodruff.

Another alternative is to buy a fake tree that can be reused year after

year. Unfortunately, these are usually made of plastic, a nonrenewable resource.

Information Sources

• Local nurseries or gardening supply stores for suggestions on appropriate species for particular environments.

• Earth Access, 87 Cherry Street, Cambridge, MA 02139. Send $1 for "The Wood Report," a list of alternative rainforest products. This group suggests avoiding tropical hardwoods like ebony, lauan, mahogany, padauk, purpleheart, rosewood, teak, and wenge because these woods most likely come from unregulated or mismanaged logging of tropical rainforests.

• Global ReLeaf Program, American Forestry Association, P.O. Box 2000, Washington, D.C. 20013, (800) 3685748.

• Greenbelt Movement, P.O. Box 67545, Nairobi, Kenya.

• The New Forests Project, International Center for Development Policy, 731 Eighth Street S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003, (202) 547-3800.

• Worldwatch Institute, 1776 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, (202) 452-1999. Worldwatch Paper #83, *Reforesting the Earth*, by Sandra Postel and Lori Heise.

Organizations That Plant Trees

• Friends of Trees, P.O. Box 40851, Portland, OR 97240, (503) 233-8172.

• Global ReLeaf Program, American Forestry Association. A $5.00 call will plant one tree. (900) 420-4545.

• Philadelphia Green, The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 325 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106, (215) 625-8280, Ms. Susan Phillips.

• TreePeople, 12601 Mulholland Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90210,

(213) 273-TREE or (818) 753-4600.

• Trees Atlanta, 96 Poplar Street N.W., Atlanta, GA 30303, (404) 522-4097.

• Trees for Houston, P.O. Box 13096, Houston, TX 77219-3096, (713) 5238733.

Choosing and Using Cars

The car has been called "the most destructive agent of social disintegration, ecological contamination, poisoning of people and environments, waste of energy, and even homicide (outstripping violent crime by more than two to one)." Most of us are dependent on cars, but we can use and choose them more wisely, and we can pressure manufacturers to produce less environmentally destructive models.

When shopping for a new vehicle, compare miles-per-gallon (mpg) ratings among the different models and purchase a top performer. The average U.S.-made car got only 19 mpg in 1987, but the Geo Metro (manual) gets 53 mpg in the city; the Honda Civic CRX HF (manual) gets 50; and the Ford Festiva (manual) gets 39. Prototype cars now exist that get over 100 mpg— Renault's Vesta and Toyota's AXV. Peugeot, Volkswagen, Volvo, and other foreign makers have prototypes that get from 70 to over 100 mpg. Battery powered cars are also on the drawing boards, but manufacturers need to know if a market for such vehicles exists.

Reduce the use of your vehicle. Walk, ride a bike, use mass transit, or car pool as much as possible. When you must use a car, arrange your schedule to combine errands so that you drive no more than necessary.

Save energy by keeping your car tuned and tires inflated to their proper pressure. Avoid features that use additional electricity, like electric windows and seat controls, and try to use the air conditioner less.

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To help make the car a clean machine, you can take several steps:

1. Ask your local representatives to support legislation that would require car manufacturers to increase gas efficiency of all models.

2. Ask car manufacturers to develop altematives to the combustion engine. 3. Ask state legislators to implement a program for reporting vehicles that emit visible air pollution.

Further Reading

- Worldwatch Institute, Worldwatch Papers, #90, *The Bicycle: Vehicle for a Small Planet,* by Marcia Lowe; and #84, *Rethinking the Role of the Automobile,* by Michael Renner; $4.00 each.

- *Garbage* magazine, "Cars," November/December, 1989. 113.

- Register, Richard. 1987. *Ecocity Berkeley.* $10.95. North Atlantic Books, 2800 Woolsey St., Berkeley, CA 94705.

Reprinted from *Calypso Log* , August, 1990, No. 21.

REPRINTS (cont'd.):

Items from Jerry Mintz's *AERO-GRAMME:*

NELLIE DICK AND THE MODERN SCHOOL MOVEMENT (from *AERO-GRAMME #4*)

For more than a year I have been putting together a video featuring Nellie Dick, a 97-year old pioneer in alternative education. At last, it is finished and available for purchase and distribution. The following is a review of the video by Dr. **Ron Miller,** Editor of *Holistic Education Review:*

> "Nellie Dick and the Modern School Movement" offers a rare and intimate glimpse into an important educational movement of the past. As we listen to this remarkable 96-year-old woman describe her experiences in anarchist schools of the 1910's and 1920's we realize how many of the issues we struggle with today are perennial educational questions. Alternative and humanistic educators today, who advocate both greater freedom and responsibility for young people, will learn how Nellie Dick and her colleagues worked out this delicate balance. Those who resist the conservative tide of "cultural literacy" and obsessive standardized testing will be inspired by the passionate idealism of the Modern School people; they believed that people learn from the time of birth irrespective of our efforts to teach them what we think they should know--and their faith in the learning process was borne out by the creativity and joyful learning of their students.

Nellie Dick at James Dick's house

Dr. James Dick, Nellie's son, also appears in the video. He describes the Modern Schools from a student's perspective, since he was literally born into the movement. Now 70, and a well known

pediatrician in Oyster Bay, he was one of the founders of the Summerhill Society. Summerhill, the Dicks note, came *after* the Modern School Movement was started.

The video also shows excerpts from last year's Modern School reunion, in New Brunswick, New Jersey. That reunion featured presentations by former students of the Modern Schools in Spain, where the movement began, with the work of **Francisco Ferrer**. Ferrer founded literally hundreds of schools, until he was shot by the government in 1909. Yet the movement continued in Spain until the 1930's.

I just returned from the 1990 **Modern School** reunion. **Paul Averich** was a featured speaker. He wrote the book, "The Modern School Movement", which is strongly recommended reading. Nellie Dick was also scheduled to speak. She just returned home a week ago from the hospital, after suffering from a slight stroke. People didn't know if she'd make it, but she did, and spoke for 45 minutes. We were thrilled! The dozen "Nellie Dick" tapes that I'd brought with me were sold out. But, as Jay Leno says, we'll make more. I'll give a complete report on the reunion in the next *AERO-GRAMME*.

We will sell the *Nellie Dick and the Modern School Movement* tape for half price, $25, to *AERO-GRAMME* subscribers, until October 15th. We can also make a copy tape of this year's reunion, with **Nellie and Paul Averich's** talks, for the same price. In Europe, the **Nellie Dick** tape can be ordered in the PAL system from Clive Baldwin, 357 Oldham Rd, Rochdale,

Lancashire OL16 SLN. The price is £15. **Clive Baldwin** is a member of **Lib Ed Magazine...**

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION TEACHER TRAINING (from *AERO-GRAMME #2)*

We've received several responses to the story in the last issue on the possibility that we may help **Friends World College** set up a teacher training program for alternative education. Dr. **Don Nilson** of the school is in the process of exploring the possibility with other faculty and administrators.

Robert Butera, a Friends World College graduate now living in Philadelphia, expressed interest in participating in such a program and *working at an alternative school*, to follow up on his Yoga Teachers' Training Course in Bombay, India.

Frank Adams, director of the Industrial Cooperative Association in MA, wrote to suggest curriculum built around the worker-owned cooperative. He said he would be willing to work on the development of such a curriculum. I knew Frank from a time when he was teaching at **Goddard College**. He has written several books, including one about Dr. **Royce (Tim) Pitkin**, founder of Goddard College.

Nat Needle, who founded and directed New Salem Academy in Massachusetts and is now teaching in public school, wrote to express interest in *helping to develop the alternative education teacher training project.* He says he will earn his doctorate as of February 1st.

Steve Boncheck, of Harmony School in Bloom-

ington, IN, tells us that **Dara Backler,** a Harmony graduate now going to **Friends World College** will intern at Albany's **Free School** as a result of her original meeting with Dr. Nilson and myself at the college [As of October, 1990, your editor is happy to report that indeed Dara was indeed with us at The Free School for her internship. She brought us adults a wealth of insight and the kids she worked with a lot of love, and has written a splendid article for **FWC** on "us" which will appear in a future issue of ΣΚΟΑΕ. As a result of her periodic reports to her college, we now have a future internship connection with them as well. Thanks, Steve, thanks Dara, thanks, Jerry, thanks, Universe!].

This might be a good place to mention that **Ivan Goldstein,** a graduate of **Hampshire College,** is *interested in working at an alternative school next year.* He is now finishing his student teaching and getting his certification. His address is 492 S. Union St., #3, Burlington, VT 05401.

(from *AERO-GRAMME #3)*

In February I received a letter from **Joseph Fernandez,** New York City's new Chancellor. I had met him at last year's **Alternative Schools** Conference in Orlando, Florida. In his letter he said, "..As you can imagine, I have been quite busy settling in as Chancellor, " and he asked me to meet with his staff to explore possibilities. Since that time I have met with Ms. **Amina Abdur-Rahman,** Deputy Chancellor, **Steve Phillips,** Director of New York's 21 alternative high schools, and Anthony Alvarado,

Superintendent of District 2 (and the person who initiated changes in District 4). Among other things, Ms Abdur-Rahman complained that many districts in the city did not understand what their true options were in restructuring schools.

In a related development, **Julian Wilder,** a professor at **Adelphi College,** read *AERO-GRAMME* and decided to set up an appointment for me with Jeffrey Kane, the Dean of Education. Wilder, who was once associated with Long Island's Learning Tree School, was particularly mterested in following up on the Alternative School Teacher Training idea. We've developed an idea for a summer program that would train teachers who want to teach in New York City's alternative schools, and would give them temporary certification. We've submitted it for comment to Femandez' office. Also, I will be speaking at Adelphi on altemative education on April 26th.

Also related was a trip that I just took to Keene, New Hampshire to celebrate **Antioch New England Graduate School's** 25th anniversary. I graduated from the school with an MAT when it was in Putney, Vermont. Antioch New England now has some remarkable programs, includmg off-site professional development, Waldorf training, and a Doctoral program in psychology. But as luck would have it, I got to talk to Dr. Guskin, President of Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. He was very interested in the alternative school teacher training idea, and asked me to develop some ideas (Guskin is credited with suggesting the idea of the Peace Corps to President Kennedy). One possibility

would be to work it directly through Antioch's extemal Masters' program, administrated by **Jackson Kytle**, Antioch's Vice President, whom I also met again at Keene.

Several people have written to me to express interest in the idea of establishing a teacher training program for alternative education. I think this could even include home educators. One way or another it needs to be established if we are going to make the changes that must be made.

(from *AERO-GRAMME #4*)

We are still pursuing this [i.e., alternative education teacher training] concept, as are other people on several fronts. With thousands of alternative schools and perhaps millions of homeschoolers, it is amazing that there is still no complete program that we know of that addresses this need.

I regret to inform you that **Chancellor Joe Fernandez** dropped the ball when the dean of a local university proposed that such a program could be set up for New York City. But considerable interest in the idea has been expressed by Goddard College, Friends World College, Antioch University, and Adelphi University.

Jim Murphy, who teaches at the public alternative, West Side High School, in New York City, is actively looking for a graduate program in alternative education. He writes, "Why don't you write a $500,000 grant that includes 3 or 4 appropriate schools..?" and gives several suggestions.

Jackson Kytle was directing an external masters at **Antioch University,** which seemed to have some potential, when he was named the new President of **Goddard College.** We have been in communication with him about this. Presently he is participating in the **School Year 2000 Conference,** in Switzerland.

At the NCACS conference, we talked to **Dave Balough, of Greenbriar School,** who is on a committee to explore the creation of a teacher training program.

Reprinted with permission from Jerry Mintz's *AERO-GRAMME.*

REPRINTS (cont'd):

THE EGO AND HIS OWNER
by "Max Stirner"(excerpt)

...No thought is sacred, for let no thought rank as "devotional"; since no feeling is sacred (no sacred feeling of friendship, mother's feelings, etc.), no belief is sacred. They are all alienable, my alienable property, and are annihilated, as they are created, by me.

The Christian can lose all *things* or objects, the most loved persons, these "objects" of his love, without giving up himself (that is, in the Christian sense, his spirit, his soul) as lost. The owner can cast from him all the thoughts that were dear to his heart and kindled his zeal, and will likewise "gain a thousandfold again," because he, their creator, remains.

Unconsciously and involuntarily we all strive toward ownness, and there will hardly be one among us who has not given up a sacred feeling, a sacred thought, a sacred belief; nay, we probably meet no one who could not still deliver himself from one or another of his sacred thoughts. All our contention against convictions starts from the opinion that maybe we are capable of driving our opponent out of his intrenchments of thought. But what I do unconsciously I half-do, and therefore after every victory over a faith I become again the *prisoner* (possessed) of a faith which then takes my whole self anew into its *service*, and makes me an enthusiast for reason after I have ceased to be enthusiastic for the

Bible, or an enthusiast for the idea of humanity after I have fought long enough for that of Christianity.

Doubtless, as owner of thoughts, I shall cover my property with my shield, just as I do not, as owner of things, willingly let everybody help himself to them; but at the same time I shall look forward smilingly to the outcome of the battle, smilingly lay the shield on the corpses of my thoughts and my faith, smilingly triumph when I am beaten. That is the very humor of the thing. Every one who has "sublimer feelings" is able to vent his humor on the pettinesses of men; but to let it play with all "great thoughts, sublime feelings, noble inspiration, and sacred faith" presupposes that I am the owner of all.

If religion has set up the proposition that we are sinners altogether, I set over against it the other: we are perfect. For we are, every moment, all that we are, nor do we need be more. Since no defect cleaves to us, sin has no meaning either. Show me a sinner in the world, and, if no one any longer needs to do what suits a superior, if I only need do what suits myself, I am no sinner if I do not do what suits myself, as I do not do injury in myself, a "holy one"; if, on the other hand, I am to be pious, then I must do what suits God; if I am to act humanly, I must do what suits the essence of man, the idea of mankind, etc. What religion calls the "sinner," humanitarianism calls the "egoist." But, once more: if I need not do what suits any other, is the "egoist," in whom humanitarianism has become to itself a new-fangled devil, anything more than a piece of nonsense? The egoist, before whom the humane shudder, is a spook

as much as the devil is: he exists only as a bogie and phantasm in their brain. If they were not unsophisticatedly drifting back and forth in the antediluvian opposition of good and evil, to which they have given the modern names of "human" and "egoistic," they would not have freshened up the hoary "sinner" into an "egoist" either, and put a new patch on an old garment. But they could not do otherwise, for they hold it for their task to be "men." They are rid of the Good One; good is left!

We are perfect altogether, and on the whole earth there is not one man who is a sinner! There are crazy people who imagine that they are God the Father, God the Son, or the man in the moon, and so too the world swarms with fools who seem to themselves to be sinners; but, as the former are not the man in the moon, so the latter are—not sinners. Their sin is imaginary.

Yet, it is insidiously objected, their craziness or their possessedness is at least their sin. Their possessedness is nothing but what they could achieve, the result of their development, just as Luther's faith in the Bible was all that he was competent to make out. The one brings himself into the madhouse with his development, the other brings himself therewith into the Pantheon and to the loss of Valhalla.

There is no sinner and no sinful egoism!

Get away from me with your "philanthropy"! Creep in, you philanthropist, into the "dens of vice," linger awhile in the throng of the great city: will you not everywhere find sin, and sin, and again sin? Will you not wail over corrupt humanity, not lament at the

monstrous egoism? Will you see a rich man without finding him pitiless and "egoistic?" Perhaps you already call yourself an atheist, but you remain true to the Christian feeling that a camel will sooner go through a needle's eye than a rich man not be an "un-man." How many do you see anyhow that you would not throw into the "egoistic mass"? What, therefore, has your philanthropy (love of man) found? Nothing but unlovable men! And where do they all come from? From you, from your philanthropy! You brought the sinner with you in your head, therefore you found him, therefore you inserted him everywhere. Do not call men sinners, and they are not: you alone are the creator of sinners; you, who fancy that you love men, are the very one to throw them into the mire of sin, the very one to divide them into vicious and virtuous, into men and unmen, the very one to befoul them with the slaver of your possessedness; for you love not *men*, but *man*. But I tell you, you have never seen a sinner, you have only—dreamed of him.

Self-enjoyment is embittered to me by my thinking I must serve another, by my fancying myself under obligation to him, by my holding myself called to "self-sacrifice," "resignation," "enthusiasm." All right: if I no longer serve any idea, any "higher essence," then it is clear of itself that I no longer serve any man either, but—under all circumstances—*myself*. But thus I am not merely in fact or in being, but also for my consciousness, the unique.

There pertains to you more than the divine, the human, etc.; *yours* pertains to you. Look upon yourself as more powerful than

they give you out for, and you have more power; look upon yourself as more, and you have more.

You are then not merely *called* to everything divine, entitled to everything human, but *owner* of what is yours, that is, of all that you possess the force to make your own; and you are *appropriated* and capacitated for everything that is yours.

People have always supposed that they must give me a destiny lying outside myself, so that at last they demanded that I should lay claim to the human because I am—man. This is the Christian magic circle. Fichte's ego too is the same essence outside me, for every one is ego; and, if only this ego has rights, then it is "the ego," it is not I. But I am not an ego along with other egos, but the sole ego: I am unique. Hence my wants too are unique, and my deeds; in short, everything about me is unique. And it is only as this unique I that I take everything for my own, as I set myself to work, and develop myself, only as this. I do not develop men, nor as man, but, as I, I develop--myself.

This is the meaning of the—*unique one*.

"Max Stirner" is the pen-name of a nineteenth century German writer and thinker who became a beacon for turn-of-the-century anarchists but never achieved universal popular acceptance - perhaps you can see why. That's all I know about him at this point. This excerpt was sent to me by one of my subscribers, Don Stevens, who is a kind of Max Stirner himself. Thanks again, Don. And if any one of our readers can give me more information about this spiritual/political maverick, I will print it with gratitude.

BOOK REVIEW:
EMBODYING EXPERIENCE: Forming a Personal Life

by Stanley Keleman Center Press (Berkeley, California), 1987, $14.95

Reviewed by Mitchell Hall

This brief companion to Keleman's *Emotional Anatomy* (see the July 1987 *Perspective* [the newsletter of the Association of Humanistic Psychology - ed.]) approaches somatic-emotional reeducation lucidly and practically, without jargon. Keleman defines patterns that block us and ways to use awareness to discover these conditioned patterns of "embodying experience" along with new possibilities for creatively "forming a personal life" in more freedom.

The illustrations of Vincent Perez and the book's attractive layout and design educate while adding to the pleasure of reading.

In "self-reflection exercises," the reader engages in the actual self-dialogue which "involves the language of sensation, patterns of organ motility, heightened or lowered excitatory patterns, hormonal flows, and emotional patterns recognized as lusts and passions." All exercises follow five steps: "What am I doing? How am I doing it? How do I stop doing it? What happens when I stop doing it? How do I use what I have learned?"

Answering the five questions requires a quality of awareness that embraces all embodied reality, not a merely intellectual endeavor. When Keleman affirms, "Because I am embodied, I exist," we hear his implicit alternative to the Cartesian dictum,

"Cogito ergo sum" and the entire disastrous split between mind and body that it epitomizes.

In possibly the only polemic of the book, Keleman takes a stand against externally programmed images of human fulfillment. "Somatic process work is not interested in ideals or performances. This is an age of psychological fascism in which true individuality and natural order are distorted... Few religions could dream up the many *shoulds* of the modern world....The five steps deprogram these *shoulds* and uncover the dynamic organizing force which works in a person to create his own form" (emphasis added). Keleman's compassionate work is comparable to other contemporary approaches that respect individual awareness grounded in unique patterns, like Gendlin's focusing, Mindell's process science of the dreambody, the sensory awareness school of Gindler and Alexander's eutony.

This is a book to be read and worked with, not just once but often.

Reprinted from the Association of Humanistic Psychology's *AHP Perspective*. Mitchell Hall writes and teaches in Vermont. Stanley Keleman is a gifted neo-Reichian therapist, lecturer, poet, metal sculptor and writer whose books include *Living Your Dying*, *Sexuality, Self and Survival* and *Todtmoos*, among others. Dr. Keleman has worked and/or collaborated with Karlfried Graf von Durkheim, Alexander Lowen, David Boadella, Joseph Campbell, James Hillman, and others. His bodywork system is available at his Center in Berkeley, California.

REVIEWS:

THE CLOSING OF THE AMERICAN HEART - What's Really Wrong With America's Schools, by Ronald H. Nash, Probe Books, 1990. reviewed by Mary Leue

Professor Ronald H. Nash, graduate of Brown University and Syracuse University, has been teaching philosophy and religion for more than twenty-five years at Western Kentucky University, and has written or edited twenty books on topics of concern to American Christians, such as *Faith and Reason, Poverty and Wealth* and *Social Justice and the Christian Church.* Dr. Nash is a well-read person and an informed scholar of the history of ideas. This book is an excellent source of information for anyone interested in the educational viewpoint represented by a representative of the informed apologetics of the mainstream, conservative American Christian Establishment. In the course of presenting his argument for the importance of asserting the existence of Divine Revelation in the workings of human life and culture, Nash offers what to me is a trenchant exegesis of both the current crisis in education and what he believes to be its origin in the history of American culture and the institution of education as a reflection of that culture.

Here, I believe, is a book well worth reading by alternative educators as a resource for analyzing and understanding the degree to which alternative and Christian educators may view the education issue from a common perspective, for the purpose of clarifying their own particular conclusions arising from their diagnosis of the problem. Common problem, differing solutions. The difference lies in what each group sees as the meaning of the symptoms being described. The fact that Professor Nash' conclusions may differ quite radically from those of some - perhaps even most - of us alternative educators is, for me, less relevant than that we clearly understand ourselves and others who are facing the same problems - the same symptoms of something seriously amiss - yet are apparently arriving at vastly divergent views of its cause, and hence of its cure. Sure - problems are to be solved - but if we as mutually injured Americans can work together through mutual understanding,

we can all gain, it seems to me.

Still another possible benefit to be gained from Professor Nash's book: if the charge sometimes made against alternative education that it is anti-academic - or even anti-intellectual - has any merit, here's a book which may help us to fill in an incomplete informational data-base in the on-going story of the history of education in our country, as told by a lively, informed and principled believer in his own values. I for one feel that I have gained a great deal from reading it.

It's funny, but I hesitate to detail the argument laid down by Nash here, for fear of triggering off latent prejudices in my readers who might be sensitive to code words like "secular humanism," "relativism," "moral illiteracy," and the like. These terms have been used by the radical right wing of the Evangelical Christian establishment to rationalize and reify their own no-nothingism, spiritual arrogance and defensive orthodoxy by thus labeling - and, by implication condemning - anyone who fails to hold as reality the ideal life centered in family, church and school which is represented by that fundamentalistic word view. Nash himself calls this kind of defensiveness "spiritual ghettoism," seeing it as the result of a feeling of such entrenchment as to preclude any balanced view of the "world out there."

My worry would be a similar one concerning "us" - that fearing a sense of isolation, perhaps even of moral weakening, from the pressure of the educational establishment and its apologists may sometimes have the effect of keeping us from understanding - let alone respecting -the thinking of those who may radically disagree with us. I'd really like to hew to the view that a book can never be judged by its cover, but only by the quality of its contents - in this case, the quality of the educational experience of every child and every teacher in every school, whatever its title.

I think that's all I'm going to say in this review. I'll present a full report in the next issue of ΣΚΟΛΕon the actual thesis of the book as Nash develops it. Let this serve to whet your appetite and twang your heartstrings! Or start the alarm bells ringing - whatever!

FEAR AND FORCE VS. EDUCATION
by Charles G. Wieder

(This is the third of three parts. Parts one and two are published in the two previous issues of ΣΚΟΛΕ.)

In this study Charles G. Wieder examines his own teaching experience, and draws upon a wealth of student testimonies and professional studies to address questions concerning:

Fear and Force Tactics in Schools. The greatest fear and force is shown to be perpetrated not by "delinquent" students, but—with full community sanction—by parents, teachers, and school authorities.

Schools as Humanizing Institutions. What does it mean to educate? What kind of atmosphere must prevail if real learning is to occur?

The Proper Range of Teacher Authority. Which teacher-imposed sanctions and restrictions are appropriate, and which suppress students' intellectual and psychological growth?

The Proper Range of Student Freedom. A Student Bill of Rights is proposed.

CHAPTER FOUR
SOME CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF FORCE AND UNIFORMITY IN EDUCATION

> There is the same obsession with power and discipline [as in the ghettos of New York] everywhere; for most American children there is essentially one public school system in the United States, and it is authoritarian and oppressive. Students everywhere are deprived of the right to make choices concerning their own destinies.
>
> —Herbert Kohl, *The Open Classroom*

Equality of educational opportunity does not mean uniformity of instruction. Children differ; and similar types and amounts of instruction would affect them differently. Indeed, teaching methods and materials would have to be varied with respect to individual student aptitudes, interests, and abilities in order to provide students with an equitable education. In other words, our obligation as parents and teachers is not to educate our children equally, but rather to educate them uniquely: to offer a variety of teaching methods and instructional modes that are suited to individual student differences in cognitive style, readiness, etc. Then and only then can we expect to help each child fulfill his (her) educational potential.

Libertarian scholar Murray N. Rothbard argues for educational diversity and freedom from coercion as follows:

> Each individual should have the freest possible scope for the development of his faculties and personality. In order to have this scope, he must have freedom from coercion which necessarily represses and destroys human growth and endeavor. An atmosphere of coercion is far from being conducive to reason and creativity. If everyone has equal defense against violence, this 'equality before law' will permit him to maximize his potential.[10]

Later Rothbard quotes English educator and literary critic Herbert Read on the diversity of individuals and the effects of uniform compulsory education:

> Mankind is naturally differentiated into many types, and to press all these types into the same mold must inevitably lead to distortions and repressions. Schools should be of many kinds, following different methods and catering for different dispositions . . . differentiation is an organic process, the spontaneous and roving associations of individuals for particular purposes...[11]

The function of rules of conduct is to create uniformity where there would otherwise be greater diversity. This uniformity can be either productive or counter-productive to a school or to a society. The difference is one between a just and an unjust moral code.

Regarding the uniformity of the effect of schooling, James Coleman writes:

> A reasonable conclusion is, then, that our schools have great uniformity insofar as their effect on the learning of pupils is concerned.[12]

What are the forces that shape—that is, influence or determine—our behavior? There are several routes. Individuals or groups can use physical force to get other individuals or groups to do something they would not otherwise choose to do. This form of social coercion will be referred to as *initiated force*. Secondly, physical force can be employed to constrain someone from acting in a manner that is deemed deviant or improper. Or, thirdly, force can be *retaliatory*, where an individual or group acts to prevent or put a

stop to aggression. These three types of imposition of force against someone's will—initiated force, constraining force, and retaliatory force—might be more appropriately referred to in the language of the school yard: "starting up"; "breaking up"; and "getting back."

Educationally, and morally as well, the initiation of force is never justified, for reasons to be discussed in more detail later. The other two forms of force may, under certain circumstances, be both necessary and appropriate.

Despite its immorality and counter-productivity, initiated force is common both at school and at home. It should be pointed out that threat of force is essentially equivalent to actual force as far as education is concerned. The lesson being taught is: when you want someone to do something which they don't want to do, it's appropriate to make them do it—'cause talking don't get you nowhere nohow.

Let us now consider the educational implications of constraining and retaliatory force. When a baby is making a break for the street, it is quite proper to restrain him (her). After dusting the two of you off, you should of course not hesitate to explain the reason for taking such action, especially if you are asked. Regarding retaliatory force, if your daughter is being beaten up by the neighborhood bully on a regular basis, she should feel free to complain without being embarrassed. She should also expect that her parents will take action to protect her in the future.

In a social context, coercive force entails the unprovoked initiation of action directed against someone (or group) against his

(her) consent, directly limiting his (her) freedom of action as a result. Freedom, on the other hand, refers to a state in which no physical restraints are imposed by some person(s) on others. Persons, protected against such coercion, are left free to choose between alternative social affiliations and norms, or to abstain altogether from making such selections. As indicated earlier, not all social affiliations a person might enter into will prove to be beneficial. Isolating oneself socially may at times be the best course of action.

In sum, an individual student is not really free if the only choices are between conformity to a school dress code and public ridicule accompanied with solitary confinement in the Dean's office for an indefinite period of time. In this context, freedom would have to include the option to abstain from any official or informal dress regulations (a choice which may entail one's own social ostracism), or the option to leave school with no penalty other than being marked absent.

This conception of force clearly differentiates physical force from what is typically referred to as "psychological pressure," which may result from the student's own desire for peer or adult approval. In these so-called cases of "psychological pressure," the alleged victim is in fact usually free to abstain from circumstances which are suspect. The effect of such "pressures" is more that of an influence rather than that of actual coercive force. For this reason, to include "psychological pressure" in a definition of *coercive force* would stretch the meaning of the term beyond usefulness.

I would also argue against too narrow a conception of coercive force. A teacher asking for a student's attention while wielding a yardstick within striking distance is exerting coercive force, particularly if that teacher has the reputation for drawing blood at the slightest provocation.

Force, or the threat of coercive, physical force is highly restricting psychologically. Such coercion denies persons the I freedom to act in accord with their own best judgment. Intellectual effort and accomplishment are denied at the level of application or action. Though they are often quite undesirable, non-physical sanctions or "pressures" at least leave open the option of abstention.

Certain forms of coercive force are clearly visible in public schools. Indeed, compulsory attendance is a foremost instance. Some of the more obvious sources of such force include teachers, school administrators, and the students themselves.

Between the ages of four or five and sixteen, with the help of truant officers, children are forcibly taken from their homes and put into schools whose methods, philosophy, and instruction are often misunderstood or disapproved of by parents.

Alternatives to public schooling are few and far between. What alternative schools there are may be made financially unfeasible because parents must also share the burden for the maintenance of the "free" public schools. In addition, the number, educational content, and structure of private schools are largely determined by governmental controls and regulations. Accreditation and certification requirements are examples of such regulatory

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controls.

Over the past decade, the federal government has expanded its educational monopoly into the area of educational research and curriculum development. In contradistinction to an educational system where a variety of ideas and philosophies are competing for support, one central political body largely determines school curriculum content, graduation requirements, teaching methods, and test criteria, to name only some of the major spheres of "influence."

Generally, teachers have a fairly wide latitude in instructional decision-making, given the limitations of class-size and range of student interests and abilities. As much as possible they try to work directly with the students. Within certain limits of facilities, equipment, parental support, and the like, the teacher for the most part determines how and what instruction is to take place and the sequence and priority of curriculum material.

It should perhaps be noted that whatever autonomy teachers may have is probably not the result of conscious decision-making, but rather a consequence of parental and administrative disinterest or preoccupation with other matters.

Thus, within the confines of the classroom, teachers regulate student behavior. Within this context, what should be proper student behavior? And what should be the relationship between the students and the curriculum?

One teacher may invite inquiry and make every effort to present material clearly, seriously taking into consideration student interests, attitudes, and knowledge. In such classrooms the students

come to feel that inquiry is welcome. But in contradistinction, it is as common to find that students are channeled into a narrow, highly restricted range of acceptable styles of expression and modes of inquiry.

School dress codes, some of which are currently being found unconstitutional, are symptomatic of the moral dilemma of today's schools. They represent a silly and unnecessary restriction on students. Their anti- or a-morality becomes apparent when students see that the penalty for wearing shirt-tails outside of their pants receives the same punishment as destroying a student's notebook or drawing. Wearing dresses "x" inches above the knee (yielding an inch each year until pants are finally permitted) may result in the same detention as beating up a new student as part of an "orientation" ceremony.

One might ask, where in all this is there concern for learning? What are the educational values the students are being exposed to for up to eight hours each school day? To some it might appear that "discipline" has in fact usurped learning as the major objective of the schools. What does it mean when discipline— meaning sitting quietly at one's seat— becomes the primary educational objective across the nation?

"Major" and "minor" subjects are determined for the most part without regard for students' aptitudes and interests; and neither students nor parents have much to say in the matter. Strict time allotments for learning do not take into consideration the extent of a student's involvement in a particular assignment. A bell rings

warning the students to set aside their math books and move to a unit on the Civil War, and then onto "community helpers" and then, who knows? Sometimes attentive and at other times mentally adrift, students have to work hard to stay motivated and keep the random flow of events organized in their minds. Disciplinary action is interspersed in the classroom with touches of subject matter. Comprehension is made especially difficult because there is little opportunity to apply, evaluate, or internalize the material being "covered." It is a rare student who is able to make sense out of such "instruction."

Now add to the above description of the typical school curriculum such items as forced socialization and forced "show and tell." One nursery school text,[13] for example, goes so far as to advocate making available only building blocks which are too heavy for any one child to carry alone, the purpose being to "encourage" the development of democratic, social skills.

In how many other ways do parents and teachers deny a child privacy and force such self-denial? The following personal anecdote captures a theme all too common in my experience:

> Upon solution of a puzzle or a math problem, the students are asked to share their accomplishment and their new-found knowledge with the class or with a student in the class they dislike. In defiance, one boy threw a puzzle to the floor rather than obey. He was then forced over tears of embarrassment, to put the puzzle back together in front of the class.

Other perhaps less conspicuous instances of force in our schools lie just beneath the surface in the "hidden curriculum." These include lack of elbow room, shared lockers and cubbies, restrictions on talking, mobility, and satisfaction of bathroom needs, as well as a high student-to-teacher ratio, all of which impose limits on learning and the expression of ideas.

All social situations, including teaching, entail some form of behavioral limitation. The question, however, is one of the appropriateness of the limitations in relation to the values afforded—rather than imposed upon—students. Society and education are both conditional values. At different times and in different forms, one of these values may be more or less important to an individual. education and social relations are values only to the extent that they support and do not deny other values that are held by students. If, for example, the price a student must pay for an education is debilitating neurosis, the education is probably not worth it. The goals and the means of education cannot be imposed on students without their acceptance, a fact evident today in antiestablishment marches and rallies against the blind persistence of parents who are clinging to their indefensible, parochial "patriotic" traditions. With desperate pleas and sometimes with their lives, today's students are rejecting any and all attempts at acculturation despite the alluring fringe benefits the establishment has to offer in the form of yachts, lawn mowers, and redwood whirlpool hot-tubs.

What are the lessons to be learned from the violent demonstrations on our college campuses in the late 1960's? Our

attempts to force our children to accept our values met with outright rejection. In a way, one could argue that part of our dilemma stemmed from the successes of our schools. The graduates of our compulsory, coercive school system may in fact have learned their lessons all too well: at Kent State, Columbia, Stanford, U.C. Santa Barbara and Berkeley violent injury and massive destruction seriously impaired the learning process. Throughout each disastrous state of siege echoed loud and clear the recurring themes of repression, coercion, and conscription. Compare these and similar atrocities to the less apparent consequences of force in education which exert their toll more quietly in terms of emotional disinterest, scholastic apathy, and intellectual acquiescence.

CHAPTER FIVE
MOTIVATION BY FEAR IN SCHOOLS

> One's failure is paraded before the class minute upon minute, until, when the worst spellers are the only ones left, the conspicuousness of the failures has been enormously increased.
>
> —Jules Henry, "In Suburban Classrooms"[14]

Working as the art teacher in two public elementary schools, I became aware of the following phenomenon. Asked to collect all the finished drawings in the class, four- to nine-year-old children will diligently work to keep their drawings on the top of the pile. Collection monitors will even "fight" for the privilege of having their stack, with their own drawing on top, handed to the teacher. The scene changes at around grades four and five. Collectors tend to put their drawings at the bottom of the stack. Later on, they are hidden in the middle of the stack. And as a teacher in junior high, I had trouble getting to the drawings before they were thrown into the waste basket.

Joan Beck describes the present situation and projects what should be the case as follows:

> By the time [a child is] in high school, his interest in learning is so distorted by worry about grades, by competition, by the need to win the teacher's approval, by homework assignments, and by pressures, that he has almost given up expecting learning to be a joy. Even if he is lucky enough to encounter a class or a textbook or a teacher he finds fascinating, he knows it isn't socially acceptable to

admit it.

But in the beginning, it was not so. Because of his innate drive toward competency, because of his inborn curiosity, learning was originally a pleasure; he worked almost constantly at learning during his waking hours... by looking intently at everything around him, by touching, tasting, listening, practicing sounds, exploring, trying, falling down, trying again. He enjoyed the process of learning, and he enjoyed practicing again and again what he had learned. In *Education and Ecstasy,* George Leonard persuasively argues along these same lines, that through adolescence and beyond, learning be experienced as a natural, pleasurable part of life.

At various levels of immediacy, schools abound in potential objects of fear. Paralleling the sources of force cited earlier, fear objects common in schools include the teacher, the classroom structure, both the structure and the content of the curriculum, and the school's social structure. Even parents have been known to join forces with these fear objects. Whether or not parents contribute to the anxiety their children feel toward school depends on the extent to which they act as a buffer, making the home a sanctuary of concern and consistency outside of school.

How do teachers and classrooms act as fear-objects? The effects of public ridicule can be psychologically devastating. Mistakes made in private can be painful enough; but when they are paraded in front of a child's peers, the pain becomes excruciating. Forcing a child to read aloud while standing before the class, or

forcing him (her) to participate in "show and tell," where peers behave like Roman spectators anticipating a slip or a fall—can cause irreparable damage to a child's self-esteem.

Some of the better teachers will occasionally depart from their soliloquies to raise questions. But even here, it is still very rare that teachers will pause and listen carefully to a student's response. How uncommon it is for a teacher to follow up on what students say, perhaps asking them to elaborate or provide examples of their intended meaning. And what would your guess be as to what is likely to happen when students do not have "the answer" on the tip of their tongue? How much variation from their sought-after wording are teachers willing to accept? How much time are students usually given to reply to questions or to explain themselves? And what pressure it must be on students to know that the chance to speak may not come again for a week. How often does the teacher's nod of approval or disapproval become the sole criterion of right and wrong, smart or dumb, success or failure?[15]

Intimidation of students is not at all uncommon. With brow arched in scorn, a teacher's derision "Well, we can all see quite clearly that Jane has not been paying attention!," usually accompanied by giggles from the class goon squad, can be an effective and deadly pedagogical device.

In many instances, the curriculum—in both its content and structure—contributes to the anxiety produced by the teacher. This is true, for example, when students fear that they may not be able to complete an exam or an assignment within the allotted time limit, or

when they are required to move onto another assignment regardless of their present involvement or confusion.

There are other ways the school's structure and its curriculum can function as fear objects. This anecdote is from a personal college teaching experience:

> Joyce entered her class five minutes before the official beginning of the period. She was carrying a three-dimensional object—a project that had just been critiqued in a previous class. It was a toy with moving parts which were difficult to make out since Joyce was concealing her creation from sight. Aggie asked Joyce from across the room, "What is it?" only to have her curiosity met with "It's a B+." After an attempt by Aggie to explain that she was more concerned to find out about the object itself, the issue was dropped. Joyce's depression made further discussion all but impossible—perhaps forever. The consequences, however, would not be dismissed that easily. They would likely be felt by Joyce for quite some time.

This anecdote perhaps over-dramatizes the effect that grading has all too often come to have in our education system. Tests have become educational ends in themselves rather than the means of assessing certain aspects of a student's grasp of a subject.[16]

Grades, report cards, and comparative, competitive exams of a type completely uncalled for threaten students' self-esteem. Standards of achievement and of moral worth, of success or failure, are determined by conformity to capricious pseudo-scholastic norms. Students futilely attempt to demonstrate their intellectual competencies in handling prescribed subject matter on standardized, rather than individualized, tests—tests which favor certain forms of shallow thinking—for example, speed over power—and emphasize

certain skills—such as multiple-choice selection— over other more important cognitive skills. Students are often required to regurgitate low-level items of information rather than to display their skills in analysis or evaluation.

Instead of gaining some insight into their academic strengths and shortcomings,* students are ranked in relation to their classmates, who in turn are rated against other students in other classes, which are then compared with the achievement of other schools which are further matched against schools in other school districts. The name of this deadly political game is "National Assessment."

When curriculum content is prescribed and certain limited modes of thinking and learning are dictated to the exclusion of alternative modes, when intervals of learning and the social environment are conspicuously artificial, there are certain important educational consequences. Where there is minimal consideration of student interests, aptitudes, and learning styles, there is a commensurate minimization of inquiry, exploration, and application of learning to personal, real-life activities. With little or no opportunity for self-determination and self-direction, students will tend to become authority (e.g., teacher or parent) dependent. The experience of intellectual disrespect will impede independence, creativity, and critical evaluative thinking at the level of motivation.[17]

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* [In this context, see Dave Lehman's description of Feuerstein's testing method, which does exactly that, in his article on Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, in the Spring '86 issue of *ΣΚΟΛΕ*]

CHAPTER SIX
FEAR AND FORCE AS ANTI-MIND

In any case, it would be valuable to examine how school factors affect such self-esteem, because many of these children do report low levels of self-esteem, and it is clear that experiences in school may have an effect upon this.

[Student] attitudinal variables account for far more of the variation in achievement than any other set of variables [family background or school variables].

For children from advantaged groups, achievement or lack of it appears closely related to their self-concept: what they believe about themselves. For children from disadvantaged groups, achievement or lack of achievement appears closely related to what they believe about their environment: whether they believe the environment will respond to reasonable efforts, or whether they believe it is instead merely random or immovable.

[There is] the fact that attitudes such as a sense of control of the environment, or a belief in the responsiveness of the environment, are extremely highly related to achievement, but appear to be little influenced by variations in school characteristics.

—James S. Coleman, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*.[18]

The imposition on students of good, bad, or mediocre instruction, systems of ideas, or curricula is educationally detrimental. Imposition, as distinguished from acceptance that grows out of understanding, is intellectually resisted regardless of whatever the potential or inherent value of the imposed ideas might be.

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One's own mind is experienced, subconsciously if not consciously, as a primary value in that it gives meaning to all of one's other values. Whereas one's physical survival needs are relatively obvious, one's psychological needs are less apparent though they are no less crucial to human life. Man's psychological needs are often misunderstood—for example, they may be thought of as dispensable frills. As a consequence they are often not adequately satisfied. While "authorities" debate whether heart disease or auto accidents are the nation's number one crippler, more hospital beds in this country are occupied by patients with no apparent physical disorder than for all physical reasons combined. Some one out of ten to twelve Americans in our major cities sees a therapist for upwards of fifty dollars an hour. And how many more would seek treatment if they could afford it or if they were not afraid that their friends would find out they were seeing a "shrink."? One can further ask how many individuals are in need of psychotherapy but do not admit it to themselves until they are virtually hit over the head with depression, guilt, defensiveness, hostility, or anxiety?

There are, in other words, certain psychological as well as physical preconditions for independent human survival. A fish on land gasping and writhing cannot properly be thought of *as living*, but rather, as in the process of dying. Likewise, a person who is pathologically immobilized is kept from living productively and happily.[19]

For our purposes here, without getting into a detailed discussion of the human mind, we can identify certain preconditions

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of learning and productive mental functioning. These would include self-esteem, introspective ability, a degree of perceptiveness, inquisitiveness, intellectual perseverance, open-mindedness, and certain analytic, critical, and evaluative abilities.

Self-esteem—the conviction that one's own mind is adequate for the task of grasping, integrating, evaluating, and applying one's knowledge of the world—is probably one of the most essential factors affecting mental functioning. The will to mental efficacy, fueled by self-esteem, is as important psychologically as is one's cognitive capabilities. But how does one come to know about and develop this attitude toward one's ability to cope with the world—a frame of mind that is more a feeling than a consciously held conclusion? And more specifically, how is self-esteem affected by fear and force?

Thinking involves a complex array of skills that must be developed. We are born *tabulae rasae*. Both the content of our minds and its methods of functioning are acquired. Mental processes operate on the content of our mind. The ideas, information, and beliefs that we hold can be either correct or fallacious, consistent or contradictory. The content can be organized carefully or sloppily, purposively or randomly. Well grounded content that is well organized aids cognitive functioning. Error can occur at any level of the thought process, making it important that we develop effective means of evaluating, checking, and refining both our means of gaining knowledge, and what we take to be true. In other words, we need to become aware of the operation of our mind—of its

limitations, complexity, and capabilities. Toward this end, introspective ability and what Lawrence Kubie calls "self-knowledge" are prerequisite skills.

Why is it that the development of such awareness of one's own mind is so commonly postponed until later in life? Why does it sometimes take a broken marriage or chronic depression to warn us of the importance of such self-knowledge? Shouldn't it be possible for such instruction to take place before the cost becomes prohibitive? Must the first opportunity for individualized instruction in psychology begin with weekly visits to a psychiatrist?[20]

I would now like to attempt to relate what has been sketched out regarding the human mind to the ideas of fear and force presented earlier.

One could argue that, in a sense, nothing is good for a person that they do not see for themselves as good. When a person perceives something as good or worthwhile, when someone is interested in pursuing some goal, their knowledge of that goal is consciously or subconsciously weighed in relation to their other values. One must decide if a particular goal is worth the effort to achieve or maintain it. A process of evaluation is involved. The criteria of evaluation are contained in one's value hierarchy. The process can be illustrated in the following anecdote:

> Oscar's mother wants him to have his vitamin-rich pablum. Oscar, age three, doesn't like pablum and doesn't trust his mother because in the past she has tricked him into doing things he didn't want to do. In the beginning, Oscar

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used to debate subjects such as spinach, bed-time, and the like. But spankings and "because-I-said-so"s quieted that tendency.

Now pablum is being put into Oscar's mouth. He doesn't bother to struggle any more. Sitting quietly, submissively, confusedly, he has somehow concluded emotionally that he doesn't like or understand adults, that he cannot figure out for himself what is good, that he is not particularly good at thinking, that thinking is not particularly good, and that perhaps he is basically not good.

To paraphrase a dialogue from Haim Ginott's *Between Parent and Child:*

Son (returning from school): Y'know Dad, I'm kinda dumb.
Dad: Whatta y' mean? You're my boy.
Son: It's not that Dad. Y' see...
Dad: What kinda talk is this? My boy is one of the smartest, one of the best, one of the greatest... Why just look at how good you are at checkers; and only twelve years old!
Son: Yeah, but ... I still think ...
Dad: [The reader may fill in any lecture lasting about five minutes.]
(Son makes two or three futile attempts to retract the idea and drop the subject)
Dad: Look nincompoop! ... you're not dumb!!

In this dialogue, if we can call it that, the father did not, or rather would not, listen to the son's reasons for his self-admonition. From the onset, though it may have been difficult to detect, the father, like so many well-meaning adult authorities, was failing to acknowledge his son's power of reasoning while at the same time suggesting that the son consider what the older, wiser father had to say. Did the father forget that the son brought the subject up? Was he cognizant of the fact that the son might have some insight into his own mind which, incidentally, was the subject under discussion?

How, it should be asked, can the son really be expected to consider the father's suggestions at the same time he is being intellectually smothered?

Learning does not occur except by way of a mind. Once you have undercut someone's mind, all that remains is the capacity for blind acceptance of whatever advice is being offered by the nearest authority figure.

What does it mean to ask of someone that they accept advice despite their contrary understanding? Learning cannot occur bypassing a student's judgment. Just as we cannot legislate a renaissance, we can not force a mind to learn, to think long-range, to retain knowledge, and to act purposively.

If and to the extent that this has been an accurate account of the thinking-learning process, what does it mean to force a child to go to school before having some idea of what school is about? The same could be asked of forced homework and being forced to show respect for the teacher.

It could be asked if this "laissez-faire" view of education implies that adults should merely wait patiently until a child should happen to ask to attend school to study to become a doctor. Certainly not. Motivation by example and friendly persuasion are the bridges between the child's limited knowledge and all that has been achieved by mankind.

Further, it is important that formal schooling not be equated with education. As indicated earlier, many of the most important forms of learning occur outside the context of formal instruction,

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though unfortunately such learning experiences often go unappreciated by both parents and children because of the false dichotomy that has been posited between learning inside classrooms and learning on the outside.

CHAPTER SEVEN
MOTIVATION BY POSITIVES VERSUS MOTIVATION BY NEGATIVES

An individual can act in order to alleviate pain or avoid fear; or alternatively, a person can act in pursuit of pleasure, interest, or competence. And between these extremes of action toward a positive value and the aversion of a disvalue, there can be combinations of positive or negative, and healthy or neurotic motivations underlying human action.[21]

For example, an individual may partake in a discussion out of interest in the subject and in sharing ideas with the other participants. Or alternatively, an individual may pretend to be interested with the more or less conscious primary motive of, for example, asserting his intellectual superiority. This "need" to "prove" intellectual efficacy would most likely result from a low or negative self-estimate, a deficiency for which the individual is seeking remedy.

Action that is aimed primarily at remediating a deficiency, alleviating an inner conflict, or achieving homeostasis by ameliorating a negative force is referred to as deficit motivation. Alternatively, action taken for the purpose of growth or the improvement of one's circumstances has very different educational and psychological implications.[22]

Children in school often do as they are told to avoid punishment or pain. Fear of ridicule, scorn, admonition, intimidation, and the like are frequently the prime movers behind

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studies. What are the educational consequences?

Motivation by fear avoidance, to take one example, has a very different educational effect than motivation by a positive purpose. In behavior modification—an increasingly popular instructional practice—the deficit or homeostatic model of learning is embraced. The approach is insensitive to the need of students to be made aware of the objectives toward which the teacher and the curriculum are moving them. In this method of instruction students may never come to see a relationship between "reinforcement contingencies" and their behavior, nor between educational goals and their personal aspirations.

Children of normal intelligence with the potential for independent, creative work suffer from the imposition, without their awareness or consent, of a narrow set of instructional approaches and educational objectives. As a consequence of such deception and coercion students may surmise that they are considered inadequate to the task of understanding and coping with the world. A student's self-concept and motivation must suffer as a consequence.

The conception of students as self-actualizers capable of moving toward personal fulfillment by the expansion of their capabilities is educationally indispensable. The acceptance of educational objectives and methods should properly grow out of a child's understanding—out of a perceived connection between objectives and actions.[23]

As discussed earlier in a different context, the content of consciousness can be organized either systematically and

purposively or haphazardly. Error can occur at the level of application as well as at the level of encoding. It is therefore required that individuals become somewhat aware of their mental processes—aware of their limitations and their inclinations. This capability of self-awareness is facilitated when students are in on both the content and the methods that comprise their learning.

Educationally, a child's mind cannot be denied or discounted while simultaneously holding up the expectation of meaningful learning. Learning cannot occur bypassing the learner's judgment. To repeat, a mind cannot be forced to think.

In summary, in the case of deficit motivation, the activity of learning and the resultant knowledge are not integrated by the student. In the learner's mind there is no binding connection between the acquired knowledge and the rest of his knowledge and values. Where alleviation of a disvalue is the primary motivating force, learning is transient and short-range. Remove the negative stimulus and learning gradually dissipates. Incentive is lacking. Long-term retention is low. Meaning is frequently absent. There is little chance of synthesis, application, or evaluation of the knowledge.

By contrast, motivation by a positive purpose entails a perceived relationship between the act of learning and the learner's values and context of knowledge. The student knows more or less consciously the why behind the activity. There is a more or less explicit connection between values and action, and between action and goals. When the student is in on the meaning of and reason for a

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given learning activity—especially if the student initiated (or requested) the learning—he (she) will be able to engage himself (herself) more purposively. Learning can be tied to his (her) long-range goals. Integrated with the rest of the student's knowledge and values, the learning will tend to be retained and retrievable, permitting application, evaluation, refinement, and expansion.

One word of caution in concluding: The approach to learning expressed above does not imply instructional passivity. Quite the contrary. The appreciation of and respect for the student's context of knowledge, learning style, and frame of reference become the touchstones of meaningful learning. The jobs of diagnostician and trouble-shooter become a more essential part of the teacher's responsibilities. And most important is the role of motivation. Previously, where teacher requests failed, coercion was applied. Without such recourse, reasoning is the only bridge between the child's primitive context of knowledge and values and all that has been achieved by mankind. In this approach to learning, the problem teachers will face is how to keep up with the children's insatiable quest for the "three R's" and much, much more.

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CHAPTER EIGHT
IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

Based on the foregoing, a preliminary model of the educational process will be sketched out. The model will describe an environment for learning that is personally meaningful to the students and conducive to creative, independent thinking.

In education, the antithesis of fear and force is an atmosphere of mutual respect and concern for the developing mind. Instead of requiring students to "sit quietly and be well behaved," teachers will place value on and take measures to foster the development of creative inquiry, independent exploration, and purposeful experimentation. The achievement of these and related educational objectives will require a different school setting, a different kind of curriculum, and a different conception of the teacher-student relationship.

What would the curriculum emphasize and what would the educational environment look like? Would it be our goal, for example, to have children "taught proper subordination" and to "revere their rulers"? These and similar statements of "educational" philosophy can be found in the Massachusetts educational literature of the 1780's and 1790's.[24]

There is a fundamental fallacy in the attempt to impose a prescriptive curriculum on a student regardless of the student's frame of reference. In the education literature, two curriculum alternatives predominate: 1) a curriculum that is highly prescriptive

and subject-matter oriented, where modes of learning are closely monitored and controlled, and individual differences among students are discounted; and 2) the so called "progressive" approach—one that is child-centered and, as nearly as possible, devoid of organized subject matter and systematic instruction. Both approaches operate on faulty assumptions regarding learning. Intellectual development requires both a certain freedom of expression and exploration, and a certain motivation and structure. Subject matter, like the world we live in, is not without laws and structure. The fundamental curricular question becomes one of how to facilitate development of the qualities of mind we value in a manner that is consistent with the nature of learning and the nature of those subjects of study.

Figure 1 outlines some of the major differences in these approaches to education. A "fundamentalist" or subject-matter orientation refers to teaching that is characterized by academic specialization and in-depth treatment of subject matter. Students are typically expected to accommodate themselves to the curriculum which is taken as fixed and given. The emphasis is on convergent learning with uniform instructional materials and methods. Traditionally, this style of teaching has been referred to as "authoritarian."

In contrast, a "child-centered" approach to teaching places emphasis on each student's needs and interests. Learning activities often grow out of a breadth of informal student or teacher explorations. Frequently there is an absence of explanations of methods and expectations by the teacher.

STYLES OF TEACHING

	STUDENT	CURRICULUM	EDUCATIONAL EFFECTS
Fundamentalist	Discounting of individual learner differences Compartmentalization of learner types	Systematic consideration of subject matter Departmentalization of learning Norm-reference comparative evaluation	The student learns –rule following ("discipline") –reliance on authority –disrespect for alternatives and differences –*the* information and *the* modes of doing *the* subject matter –self-denial and repression –a "hands off" attitude toward the environment
child-centered	Appreciation of the student as an individual Focus on the unique and the particular Wholistic conception of child	Non-sequential Non-developmental Non-evaluative	–self-reliance and self-protection –self-expression (or exhortation of personal feelings) –divergent thinking –social interaction and social manipulation skills
type 3	Respect for individual student Concern for diagnosis and accomodation of learning problems Appreciation of both unique and universal cognitive and affective characteristics	Systematic exploration of both subject matter and student learning variables Flexibility of design to accomodate varying instructional strategies and a range of learning styles	–self-awareness, assertiveness, responsibility, and self-evaluation –respect for a diversity of lifestyles –convergent and divergent inquiry skills –critical thinking

Figure 1. "Fundamentalist," "child-centered," and "type 3" instructional approaches and their educational effects.

As it is conceived here, approach "type 3 " is one that attempts to combine depth, breadth, and emergent forms of instruction, seeking a synchronization of student interests and aptitudes with subject matter content and a wide range of Instructional procedures.

"Auto-education" was the term Maria Montessori used in speaking of the need to provide students with "liberty in a prepared environment"—the "type 3" approach. The concept of "process education" is also important in this connection.

Recognizing as insurmountable the quantity and range of accumulated data, the emphasis in process education is on the development of knowledge acquisition skills. The goal in this approach is that students learn how to learn and how to organize information. Inquiry skills and creative problem solving comprise the focus of instruction. Critical selectivity supersedes drill and repetition. Beyond the accumulation of information, there is concern for internalization and personalization. First-hand experience and emotional response are built upon rather than systematically excluded from studies. Learning is applied, not just for an exam, but to real-life problems.

Instruction would no longer be one-directional. Conclusions would not be imposed on students. Critical questioning would be encouraged in discussions. Teachers would have to rely on their powers of persuasion rather than intimidation or degradation. Course material would not be interjected in prescriptive, uniform doses to be taken at equal predetermined intervals. Rather,

opportunities for learning would be made available and educational materials would abound. Instruction would at times be systematic and at other times be spontaneous, depending on the needs of students and the requirements of the subject matter.

This synchronization of student needs and interests on the one hand, and subject matter variables is made possible by the elimination of fear tactics and coercive force. According to their natural inclinations in a stimulating educational environment, students will seek out learning. Motivation would be built into the environment and the instruction, where the students come to the teacher for help or direction. The teacher's task, in addition to building and maintaining the learning environment, would be to keep pace with the students' interests.

The teacher is recast from information dispenser to creative expositor, diagnostician, trouble-shooter, and facilitator of learning. Correspondingly, the students are recast from data receptacles bound to bolted down desks, to explorers, inventors, artists, scientists, and loving craftsman as the chairs, desks, and minds become movable.

In this conception, the teacher's knowledge of subject matter has to be translated into a form that is meaningful to the students. This requires a bringing together of the teacher's subject-matter knowledge and his (her) knowledge of the students—their aptitudes, maturity, related background experiences, and cognitive style, to name a few.

In sum, the answer is a curriculum in which subject matter is

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available in a variety of sequentially organized instructional forms corresponding to a variety of learning styles. Student self-interest and teacher persuasion replace fear and force. Within this context, the teacher-student relationship would take on a new form and meaning. In the student's eyes, the teacher will be seen as a highly skilled commentator and communicator—a learned person concerned with sharing that learning. The teacher will no longer have to impose his (her) presence, nor serve as a factory of data, nor feel obliged to convert students into good citizens. The need for strict deadlines and due dates would be alleviated. With the option of working alongside or independent of the teacher, students will be inclined to support rather than oppose the teacher. And with the same rights and privileges as students, the teacher will be better able to gain the perspective required for effective teaching. In a setting free of fear and force, the teacher would no longer have to perform the functions of drill-sergeant, group therapist, and social worker.

This outline of some features of teaching and learning in an educational setting that is devoid of fear and force is far from detailed and comprehensive. Many of the subtleties and variations in school settings, teaching styles, learner idiosyncrasies, and subject matter variables would demand a far more detailed analysis than this overview can even begin to attempt. Instead, I will offer the following exemplary teacher competencies:

1) The teacher is a connoisseur of learning and of the various areas of study that comprise the curriculum.

2) Sensitive to his (her) effect on people, the teacher is aware

and appreciative of cultural and individual differences in the ways that students learn.

3) Lastly, the teacher's competence entails an awareness of the range and the limits of his (her) expertise. Projecting sincere concern and respect, the teacher is a careful listener who is perceptive and capable of conceptualizing the students' accomplishments as well as their learning problems, and also has the inner strength to allow a student to err in the pursuit of learning without reprimand.

In Figure 2, Laura Zirbes captures the differences in instructional atmosphere that schools can create.[25] She contrasts what the situation commonly is—the "educational status quo"—with the "creative" one it could become.

Figure 3 shows the difference between the effect schools currently have on students, and the effect schools will hopefully someday have.

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EDUCATIONAL STATUS QUO	CREATIVE TEACHING
from stereotyped conformity	toward free expression
from passive compliance	toward active identification
from imposed direction	toward cooperative planning
from coercive requirements	toward voluntary commitments
from mass handling	toward individual guidance
from extrinsic motivation	toward intrinsic value concerns
from submissive acquiescence	toward wholehearted involvement
from restrictive domination	toward responsible self-direction
from stultifying repression	toward spontaneity
from fixing of habits and skills	toward the cultivation of flexible adaptive responses to life-related situations.

Figure 2. Adapted from Laura Zirbes, *Spurs to Creative Teaching*.

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POTENTIALLY	CURRENTLY
OPTIMISTIC	PESSIMISTIC
OPENS SELF UP TO NEW SITUATIONS	
TAKES IN REALITY WITH OPEN MIND AND SENSES	
THINKING IS DIRECTED TOWARD REALITY	THINKING ABOUT INADEQUACY OF SELF
BOLD, IMAGINATIVE, RESOURCEFUL	
CONFIDENT (OR AT LEAST HOPEFUL)	
NOT ASHAMED OR AFRAID OF MISTAKES –LEARNS FROM MISTAKES	
CURIOUS ABOUT LIFE–EAGER TO GET IN TOUCH WITH IT AND EMBRACE IT	LESS INTERESTED IN WHAT IS REAL–INCLINED TOWARDS FANTASY
LIKES TO EXPERIMENT	AFRAID TO TRY ANYTHING NEW –ONE FAILURE AND HE'S THROUGH
PATIENT–TOLERANT OF UNCERTAINTY AND FAILURE	CANNOT COPE WITH UNCERTAINTY
PERSISTENT	
WANTS TO DO IT HIMSELF	DEPENDENT
WILLING TO TAKE RISKS–TO EXPLORE THE NOT-YET-KNOWN	FEELS SAFE ONLY WITH THE TRIED AND TESTED
SEES UNIVERSE AS SENSIBLE, REASONABLE AND TRUSTWORTHY	SEES UNIVERSE AS SENSELESS, UNPREDICTABLE AND TREACHEROUS

Figure 3. A comparison of student potentials and their current condition in the public schools. Derived from John Holt, *How Children Fail.*

CHAPTER NINE
POSTSCRIPT

Upon rereading, I must admit that I find many of the ideas presented here to be far more elementary than they seemed during the process of researching and writing. The text is far less radical and less profound than it seemed during the passion of trying to put the ideas together.

Perhaps, in different ways, both my formative and final appraisals of the work are accurate. The idea that the earth was round had to be discovered, and, I'm told, was met with considerable opposition. So it was also with the inventions of electricity and crayons. Walking, for example, now an automatized act requiring no special conscious effort, was at one time a skill to be painstakingly mastered. And what a struggle it was. We stumbled and fell, fought and thought so that one day we might move on our own. And only after many tiring practice sessions were we confident we had mastered the skill. But how could we then rest content? There were variations to be tried—running, jumping, hopping, and skipping. There would of course be some failures and moments of frustration as these skills were in turn being mastered. And there would always remain some element of risk—of failing and falling, of more pain and disappointment. But persevering, ultimately there would be success worth all the effort.

Is education a simple matter. Yes and no. Are learning and

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teaching simple matters? What about the human mind with its potential for genius and susceptibility to neurosis? One can honestly ask: has education, as an area of knowledge, learned to walk? Do teachers and curriculum developers know where they are taking children and why?

Without adult interference, an infant learning to walk will ordinarily feel no embarrassment or guilt over falling. It is the denial of one's limitations and inadequacies that causes guilt. Consider all there is that children are incapable of. But are they the ones typically plagued with feelings of inferiority? Our guilt as adults is earned only by our boasting that we can run and jump when in fact we haven't the courage to learn to walk.

When we become like children in their struggle to learn to walk, when we firmly face up to the requirements of real learning, only then can we truly begin to fulfill our mission as educators: to provide our children with the fuel and the motivation that will enable them to succeed in their pursuit of self-expression, compassionate responsiveness, and meaningful innovation.

APPENDIX A
THE BILL OF RIGHTS
METROPOLITAN SCHOOL OF COLUMBUS

To show that good schools are possible, and that the ideas expressed in the pages of this book are neither fiction nor a dream:

The following is a list of behaviors which are expected of every person in this building. A revised list is developing as students increase in self-responsibility and understanding of themselves and others. We feel these are minimal expectations intended to promote optimum learning conditions, to help children gain a sense of responsibility and to feel safe inside and outside of the school building. The Bill of Rights below has been adopted by The Metropolitan School of Columbus from one created at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., School in Syracuse, New York.

The teachers should discuss with the students these expectations and enforce them with all children and adults.

Since learning such behavior requires effective instructions, it is the duty of each adult to develop and utilize such instructional strategies as will promote learning and how to use and live with the guidelines of the Bill of Rights.

BILL OF RIGHTS

1. All people in a school have a *right to learn* without being disturbed.

2. All people have a right to come to school and to be in school without being afraid.

3. All people in school have a *right to ask questions* until they clearly understand what is being said.

4. All people in a school have a right to know what they are *supposed to do before they can be criticized* for not doing it.

5. All people have a right to criticize any action affecting them so long as the criticism is *fair* and so long as it is said in a way that can correct the situation without *hurting innocent people.*

6. All people in a school have a right to get *good teaching* and to have a good learning atmosphere.

7. All people in a school have a right to learn how to solve problems that are bothering them.

8. All people have a right to *fair hearing* before being criticized or punished for wrong-doing.

9. All people have a *right to try to change rules* that affect them.

10. All people have a right to be *governed by authorities* who protect these rights.

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APPENDIX B
TO STUDENTS: SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT ADULTS

As this book was nearing completion, it occurred to me that what I had to say might best be directed at a younger audience—especially to students—rather than to adults who no longer think of themselves as students. This list is a consolation for my oversight.

Adults are often wrong about many things. Some even tell lies.

If something is not clear to you, don't assume that you are stupid or slow. Maybe the "something" really *IS* unclear.

If adults don't explain themselves, they cannot expect you to believe them.

If adults—especially teachers—do not speak clearly, they probably don't know what they are talking about.

If adults ever refuse to tell you why, don't pay attention to them—unless you already know why.

If adults don't practice what they preach, they have no right to expect you to.

If adults force you to do something, they should not expect you to take pride in it

If adults ever tell you that you're too dumb to understand something, they're even dumber for talking with you.

If adults ever tell you that you're too young to understand, it's probably because they're bad at explaining.

If adults do not trust and respect you, they shouldn't expect you to confide in them.

If adults bore you, they should not expect you to take interest in what they want you to do.

If adults are not consistent in what they say or do, they should not expect you to trust them.

Add some thoughts of your own:

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APPENDIX C
THE EIGHT CONSIDERATIONS

Since I have already trespassed on moral territory, why not go one step further? I will conclude this book with my version—or revision rather—of nothing less than The Ten Commandments. Incidentally, the fact that I could only come up with eight alternative commandments distresses me a bit. So if anyone reading this book can provide clues leading to the whereabouts of the other two "considerations," please pass your ideas on to me and I will be forever indebted.

I. Thou shalt do thine own thing—well—and on thine own terms.

II. Thou shalt be patient and purposeful in the pursuit of personal fulfillment.

III. Thou shalt be honest and emotionally open with thine own self as well as with others.

IV. Thou shalt listen critically and study carefully and act confidently on thine own best judgment.*

V. Thou shalt be just and compassionate.

VI. Thou shalt cultivate self-awareness, self-assertiveness, self-acceptance, and pride.

VII. Thou shalt pursue thine own happiness—responsibly.

VIII. Thou shalt contemplate and scrutinize all the preceding "considerations."**

*Judge ye and be ye willing to be judged for thy judgment.

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**Feel free to add a few of your amendments.

[OK. Here are two I thought of. You can make up some of your own:

IX. Thou shalt be willing to learn at every step of thy journey that thou are thyself the problem faced by those one wishes to help, when one least expects it.

X. There is no free lunch. Ed.]

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Rosalie and Lou Fiscarelli with Timmy Polene on the fire escape at The Free School, 1975.

PIAGET, DEWEY & SKINNER:
A STUDY OF TEACHING, LEARNING & SCHOOLING
Chapter III. Dewey
Part 1. His Theory
by Rosalie Angela Bianchi

Born in Burlington, Vermont in 1859, John Dewey is considered one of America's most influential philosophers and educators. Upon graduating from the University of Vermont, he taught elementary and high school; after that, he received a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University. From his early training in philosophy, he went on to interests in education, proceeding to teach at various universities. He became a faculty member of the University of Chicago and participated in founding a famous laboratory school, experimenting with various methods of instruction and education. From 1904 to 1930, Dewey taught at Columbia University's Teachers College.

When Dewey died in 1952, he had gained an international reputation for his pragmatic approach to philosophy, social ethics, logic, knowledge theory, esthetics, metaphysics, and education. His bibliography of all publications covers 150 pages, with a few of his most important books being: *How We Think* (1933), *Reconstruction and Philosophy* (1920), *Experience and Nature* (1926), *Logic and the Theory of Inquiry* (1930), *Democracy and* Education (1955), and *Art as Experience* (1935).

Dewey had a tremendous influence on philosophy; some

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consider him the best-known educator of this century. He believed in the unity of theory and practice, of thought and action. He opposed the traditional method of learning, where the student memorizes the accumulated knowledge in books.

He believed that learning should relate to the student's concerns, including knowledge of past and present; this should connect with the student's experiences when he/she is in a social situation. Dewey did not believe that knowledge could be attained by indoctrination or contemplation alone.

Dewey also believed that philosophy should be related to everyday life, and that its true function was to help solve human problems - not merely to formulate theories. Some say this was Dewey's greatest contribution - that he used philosophy to try to help solve education's problems, and to better humanity's lot throughout the world.

The function of Dewey's philosophy was to solve problems not merely theoretically but practically as well - this is his pragmatism. According to Dewey, theories should constantly be tested in practice - not through statistics or surveys but through the reality of common social, interactive experiences. In most academic traditions, Dewey saw that theory was far removed from practice.

Dewey saw the necessity of overcoming the duality of theory and practice (and many others as well: mind/body, natural/supernatural, body/soul, and work/play), because he believed that this prevented people from feeling vitality and unity in their everyday lives. Many people find no joy in work; their play is

often self-destructive and escapist. In education, he was especially aware that those who formulate theory had no direct communication with those who practice it. Theories were not developed out of practice and tested in practice.

Dewey saw that dualisms were deeply imbedded in our culture; our bodies were seen to be antagonists of our souls, and our minds seem to come from different places than the matter of this earth: "We seem at times to live in a world of opposites, where work and responsibility for most people are separated from pleasure and fun."[1] Can one be spiritual and materialistic at the same time, experience the constructive within the destructive and tenderness in strength? Dualisms seem to be built into our language.

How did Dewey come to see his way past these dualisms? Dewey has, at times, been called a process philosopher; he saw the world and life through the process of experience - not subjective experience (e.g., "My experience is...") but a concrete level of social interaction in which humans probe and test reality.[2] It is a means of discovering nature and does not get in the way of perceiving nature; people have claimed that subjectivity will blur perception.

We have the idea that we must be "objective," standing outside ourselves to see what's happening. Dewey says, however, that "experience is a means of penetrating further into the heart of nature."[3] It is neither subjective or objective but a combination of both; it is not just what is happening out there but within us as well. Experience is the continually occurring interaction of inner and outer

worlds; it is, for Dewey, the combination of sensory impressions, reason, and intuition. Using these qualities together is the stuff of scientific inquiry.

What about the ideal world - the images of God, truth, values, and our sense of wholeness? Dewey says we come to these ideas through our experience of the world; we do not form them in our minds prior to experience.

Primary experience gives us our grasp of concrete events; secondary experience helps us to link primary experiences together and give them meaning, seeing in them patterns and relationships. Dewey criticizes traditional philosophy as being stuck in theorizing and reflection and not testing these theories in real life experiences.[4] He said that philosophy turns people off because it doesn't deal with problems which can be solved in our everyday experience, nor does it illuminate primary experience. Sometimes, it only gives rise to puzzles which are solved by disparaging ordinary experience and calling it mere sensory impressions.

Here, Dewey said, is the test of philosophy. Does the thought end in making our lives more meaningful? Does it enrich day-to-day experience? People suffer, enjoy, desire, see, believe. This experience should be illuminated through philosophy - it should not be downgraded.[5]

"The transcendental philosopher has probably done more than the professed sensualist and materialist to obscure the potentialities of daily experience for joy and for self-regulation." Dewey says that if what he has written in *Experience and Nature* has

no other result "than creating and promoting a respect for concrete human experience and its potentialities,"[6] he will be content.

Experience is rich; thought is secondary. Experience includes both definite and indefinite, predictable and unpredictable. Our tendency, says Dewey, is to deny the existence of chance and the unknown, and to jump to a magical safeguard of universal law: "We have heaped comfort between ourselves and the risks of the world."[7] The amusement business and drugs are all to escape and forget, but all things are intertwined. Change gives meaning to permanence; only a living world can include death.

Dewey says that philosophers, in their rush for wholeness and safety, broke the world into parts in order to put it into a unified whole. They put the particular, and change, into a realm of its own and called this a dialectical problem; they substituted this problem for the real problems which come from the union of the variable and the constant. m is need for the stable and the fixed leads to a philosophy in which existence becomes what we wish it to be, as opposed to what it is.

We look to the supernatural or spiritual as being more important; people begin trying to experience the infinite without getting involved in the labor and pain of life's finite conditions. Dewey says, however, that true satisfaction comes from the union of hazardous and stable, predictable and unpredictable. It is this mixture which sets us on our quest for wisdom; but, too often, we bypass true wisdom in looking for *the* way, and *the* answer. Dewey advised us to keep in mind that there would be no

completions without incompletions; without uncertainty, there would be no certainty. Nature generates uncertainty: one must be conscious of the intersection of the problematic and determinate things and be intelligently experimental, so that one can profit by this instead of being at its mercy.

By "intelligently experimental," Dewey means that we should use our reason, intuition, and sensory experiences. From these experiences and our interaction with the world, we develop theories about the world; according to Dewey, however, we should test them in reality. He advises us to go from reality and practice to theory, and back to reality again! This, he says, leads to enriched experience.

Dewey deals with the entrenched dualism of Western civilization, mind, and matter. He says that they are both different characters of natural events, coming from being on this earth. Many believe that the mind exists before experience, that it is part of God or a world other than what we perceive through our senses. Dewey connects them by saying that matter is the order of things and mind places meanings and connections on matter; both are functional, non-static, and part of the world.[8]

Dewey believes, therefore, that love of wisdom and learning should lead to an opening and enlarging of man's ways. It should not lead to dualisms, opposites, and trying to balance and compare them. We can see the world and life without focusing on polarities, by being immersed in experience and by continually testing our beliefs and theories.

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There are two phases of human experience: consummatory (ends in themselves, peaks, direct enjoyment, celebrating) and instrumental, preparatory experiences (means, discovery, invention, labor, working toward[9]). Somewhere in history, ends were seen as final - as in liberal arts; some leisure class members enjoyed these experiences, while means were seen as menial, lower-class, practical arts. This was the foundation for the division of theory and practice; theoretical knowledge became associated with truth and completion, becoming separated from trial, work, and manipulation.

Dewey said, however, that as we set about investigating a problem, ends become more concrete. One does not begin with a solid end in mind and set about building towards it; ends develop out of means, and further ends develop out of the ends in cyclical motion. Theories are developed out of practice and are then tested and proved viable or not; practice comes first. We are brought up to take on theory first - someone else's ideas and look for examples in reality. It has been said that when we look for something in an experiment, we often find what we are looking for; our presuppositions have an effect on what we see in reality.

Piaget's theories are a case in point - people took them as ends and set up situations to prove or disprove them. Piaget saw his theories as continually opening more questions, and as means; in this respect, he might have agreed with Dewey. People didn't generally use his means - a method of exploring a child's mind through an intuitive form of questioning - to discover things for themselves. Students have been taught to disregard their experience,

and to take on or prove another's ideas. Problems which they want to investigate should be theirs, coming from their own experience of the world and from practice. According to Dewey, first comes practice and then theory (which is put to test in practice); this, in turn, generates more theory. It is not a static thing - it is a process.[10]

FOOTNOTES

[1]John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1955), pp. 239-41.

[2]John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (Chicago and London: Open Court Publishing Company, 1926), pp. 1-9.

[3]Ibid., preface, p. iii.

[4]Joseph Ratner, *Intelligence in the Modern World; John Dewey's Philosophy* (New York: The Modern Library), p. 229.

[5]Ibid., p. 8.

[6]John Dewey, op. cit., p. 39.

[7]Ibid., p. 44 .

[8]Ibid., P- 74

[9]Ibid., pp. 78-84.

[10]J. Ratner, op. cit., p. 116.

Part 2. Dewey, Communications, and How This Relates to His Ideas on Experience, Experimentalism, and Bringing Together Dualistic Views

"Of all affairs communication is most wonderful."[1]

For Dewey, communication is both consummatory and instrumental - an end in itself and a joy. It is also a means of expressing ideas, and the bridge between existence and essence; the essence of something does not come into existence unless it is communicated to some being. If communication did not exist, what would the world be like? It would be pure existence - there is no meaning unless it can be communicated to some other being. Dewey said that the mind emerges through speech[2] and the ability to communicate. One cannot talk to oneself until one speaks to others.

Man is so much a social animal that communication can and should be a vital force in our lives; for most people, however, it has a machine-like quality, where results are important but no attention is paid to the intellects and emotions of those involved. If communication is just one way, as in the handing down of directives, it becomes depersonalizing; if it is just a means, one does not take into account the consummatory aspects of the transaction as an end in itself - as a joyful and enriching experience.

If speech is only consummatory, it is just silliness, and - according to Dewey - luxurious and corrupting; speech must have a purpose as well. Dewey says that true communication has the instrumental use of reassurance, of giving the other a sense of "this is who I am and

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this is who you are to me." It has the consummatory good of an enhanced sense of membership and relationship in a social sense.

How does one communicate his or her experience in such a way as to create all of this? Dewey says to try to experiment by communicating some experience to another, and you'll find your attitude toward that experience changing. In order to communicate an experience, one must get outside of it and formulate it; one must see the experience as another would, consider how it relates to the life of the other so that he/she can appreciate the meaning of the experience.

To assimilate part of another's experience, one has to be open enough to tell him/her of one's own in an interactive process. in us, communication is like art[3]; it is educative, because to receive or to put forth communication is to have an enlarged or changed experience. It also creates a responsibility for accuracy and clarity of statement and thought.[4]

Communication seen in this way dissolves polarities; it is an opening process, not an argumentative or divisive one. We live in the world and have experiences when we use our senses, our reason, and our intuition. We discover more about this world by experimenting and then trying things out again, continually practicing, theorizing, practicing again, and on and on. Babies and children do this; this is how they learn, developing their ideas about the world through their own activity. Scientists do this (or, at least, they should). This activity occurs in a social context, through communication, which gives it meaning in the world. Dewey is

continually bringing everything back to the context of our everyday lives.

Intelligence, reason, sense perception, and intuition can be used in everyday life; wisdom, then, is not just the philosopher's domain. In this way, one is open to having experiences which are rich, and full of wonder, chance and uncertainty, and risk and safety. One experiences the wholeness of life, not the bits and pieces of existence which come from one's fear of seeing the world as it really is, here and now. This is an expansive act, however, and to define oneself within closed limits as the private subjective self does, presents - says Dewey - the "ultimate dialectic of the universal and the individual."[5] This can be the place where this powerful dualism originates.

The solution to this problem is, in Dewey's eloquent style, "... a formulated acceptance of oscillation between surrender to the external and assertion of the inner."[6] Dewey sees this happening in science and art and in communication. One's inner subjective world can manifest itself through innovations and deviations which affect institutions and the objective world, promoting communication and understanding. In this respect, the limiting and the expansive reach a harmony.

Dewey further illuminates this idea by saying that the individual can either be in harmony with the outside world's events (the world satisfies his/her needs) or can find a gap between its bias and the environment supporting its needs. The individual who feels harmony extends as far as the equilibrium of the world. The

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individual who finds a gap can, Dewey says, either conform, become a "parasitical subordinate, indulge in egotistical solitude, or set out to change the conditions to conform to its needs."[7]

In this latter process, says Dewey, intelligence is born - not the mind which enjoys being part of the whole but the individualized mind which initiates, adventures, and experiments. He says that one can either be satisfied with one's world (but that leaves one subject to inevitable change anyway, as things tend to do), or can be out there remaking, inventing, risking, and learning. The old world has to be forsaken before the new one can be discovered; this is an adventure.

> Identification of the bias and preference of selfhood with the process of intelligent remaking achieves an indestructible union of the instrumental and the final.[8]

Means and ends are joined. Experimenting with the world, seeing the world in its potentiality and actuality, allows one to let go of dualisms. Dewey says that once we get involved in causal relationships, we develop hierarchies and begin to break the world into bits and pieces. Dewey does not see cause and effect as a one-way relationship. He sees human beings acting on the world, and changing it; by this process, they too are changed. It is a cyclical process - it is growth - it is life.

FOOTNOTES

[1]John Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 166.

[2]Ibid., p. 170.

[3]Ibid., p. 7.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid, p. 244.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid., p. 245.

[8]Ibid., p. 246.

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Part 3. Dewey's Views on Education, and How They Come from His Philosophy of Experimentalism, Experience, and Interconnectedness

Dewey begins *Democracy and Education* by talking about education as a necessity of life. A living thing survives by using energies which act upon it to further its own existence; when an inanimate object is struck by a superior force, it survives by pure resistance or breaks into pieces. A living thing interacts with and uses energy, air, moisture, and soil for its own renewal: "Life is a self renewing process through action on the environment."[1] If a living thing can't use the energy acting upon it, it dies.

By "life," Dewey means not only physical life, but also social life: people's customs, institutions, and leisure; the same principle of continuity applies here. Beliefs and experiences are passed on through interaction; society renews itself through transmission and communication of ideas and values. Dewey sees schools as places in which this continuity of life takes place; he says that schools are not a preparation for life - they are life. The activity which goes on in schools should be the same as life outside school, except that the quality of the experiences is more organized and geared towards transmitting values and knowledge, good habits of thinking, and all that is valuable in a democratic society.

Dewey sees this continuity broken and criticizes traditional education for it, both in the difference in activity of a child's life outside school and in the school's subject matter and atmosphere.

The experiences children are having are not vital and important to them. Dewey sees the social medium as educative; children pick up the group's ideas and values unconsciously through activity within that group, in families and in schools.

"One's powers of observation, recollection and imagination do not work spontaneously but are set in motion by current social occupations."[2] What effect does the mood of a place have? Do its occupations engender curiosity? intolerance? thinking? Many habits and ways of thinking are formed in the constant give and take of relationships with others, and this is what educators should pay attention to.

Attitudes and dispositions are formed not by direct conveyance of beliefs, emotions, and knowledge, but by the school's atmosphere and the quality of relationships there. Children learn a school's values through common activity. Dewey said that we never educate directly; rather, we do so indirectly, through the environment's means. Morals and values cannot be indoctrinated - the social environment is the teacher.

Next, Dewey deals with education and direction. When we are most conscious of actions which control others' actions through approval, disapproval, and rewards, we tend to exaggerate the importance of this control at the expense of a more effective, permanent method. The control lies in the nature of the situation. In social situations, the actions of the young have to fit in with what others are doing.

Self-discipline is formed through experiences in which one

cares enough about the activity to make it work,and knows the effects of his/her actions on the activity. Dewey said that forming this internal control is the business of education; otherwise, we are just training children to perform acts which have no meaning to them - just as we train a horse to jump.

According to Dewey, you cannot force someone to do something which he/ she does not already intend to do; a stimulus cannot control a response. "... the stimulus is but a fulfillment of the proper function of the organ, not an outside interruption."[3] To some extent, says Dewey, all direction or control is a guiding of activity to its own end.

Lastly, Dewey looks at education as growth He has a respect for immaturity, for having the potential for growth; he sees education as development, and development is life. He says, therefore, that the educative process has no end beyond itself; it is a process of continual reorganizing, reconstructing, and transforming. Dewey says that the final purpose of schooling is to insure continued growth through life, learning from the world. This does not mean, however, that he ignores the importance of learning basic skills and learning from the past. He values these as necessary tools for learning and growth, but not as ends in themselves.

In school, one must organize one's powers in order to learn from the environment. Immaturity is not a lack of desired traits; adults need not to pour information into children's heads for five hours/day but to supply the conditions for growth Dewey says, emphatically, "keep the child's nature and arm it in the very direction

in which it points."[4] One can judge education to the extent to which it creates a desire for continued growth.

Dewey sees traditional education as failing to do this. He sees much of education as working not towards growth, but towards a static end - a "preparation for life" kind of attitude. He says that education is life, and that all this preparation depreciates what is happening in the present. Very often, schools choose aims and goals for the student, and even for the teacher, so that neither exercises his/her own intelligence but follows the goals of others. Children are passive in their learning in such schools. Dewey says that we must realize the significance of each person's growing experience; to place external goals on this is to lack respect for growth.

According to Dewey, children should learn to think in school. When you teach children to think, you educate them; to do this, you must start from an activity in which children are interested. If a genuine problem develops out of a child's activity, the teacher's job is to help him/her develop the habits of making observations and gathering information. The teacher's role is to make sure that when solutions occur to the child, he/ she is given the opportunity to test them, and to discover for him/herself whether they are valid. This is Dewey's experimentalism; it is the way in which we learn about the world and effect changes in it.

Dewey sees dualisms underlying many aspects of education, play and work, and means and ends (traditional education is seen as a means; Dewey sees it as both). Bringing means and end together

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in one activity brings together play and work, and work becomes fun - both consummatory and final.

I see Dewey as seeking a philosophy which reflects and enhances life, rather than deadening it by splitting mind and body, work and play. He saw education as a place in which children were learning to deaden their minds and hearts from well-meaning adults who were just as deadened, emotionally and intellectually. Dewey's works inspired some changes in education, but people largely misinterpreted his ideas to mean freedom and license for children. They thought that children should be allowed to do as they pleased, and this was just as mindless as what had gone on before.

What Dewey is asking us to do is rigorous and takes clear thinking; one of his major points is that living should mean experimenting within a context, within relationships, and with an open heart and mind. Practice comes first, being in the context of one's own activity; from that, a problem naturally arises. One then sets out to solve it by trying solutions and checking back to see whether they work. It is Dewey's experimentalism, combined with experience, reason, sense, and intuition - in the context of social living - which form his basis for cutting through dualisms. This is also the basis for intelligent, enhanced, and joyful living and for education; they are the same thing.

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FOOTNOTES

[1]Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 2.

[2]Ibid., p. 20.

[3]Ibid., p. 29.

[4]Ibid., p. 62.

Sam McPheeters and Timmy Polene. All Free School photos taken by Mickie McCormic, Sam's mother.

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Part 4. Where I See Dewey's Philosophy at the Free School

The Free School is a community in the center of a larger one. Most of the teachers and some of the students live within a block of the school in a kind of inner city village, which is committed to fostering emotional, intellectual, and spiritual growth in each other. m e center of the community is a growth group of twenty members which has been meeting for nine years; it consists of most of the teachers, some parents, and a former student. All of the adults at the school have made a commitment to grow on some level in their ability to love, trust, enjoy, be creative, nurture, and be responsible. From this context, the adults at the Free School create a space for themselves and the children which fosters growth.

We also pay much attention to the relationships among adults, between adults and children, and among children. Here is where children learn to live and work together in a community with common goals. Order comes from common goals which are cared about by all; no child is forced to be there but, rather, chooses to be there. Teachers are there because we want to be; our salaries are relatively low, so the rewards of being at the Free School come from working with children and each other. In this way, in Dewey's terms, labor and leisure come together.

Problems arise from the social's group's activity, and we support children to solve these problems constructively. There is the council meeting system which I mentioned earlier, in which each child and adult in the elementary part of the school has an equal voice in mak-

Abra Marion.

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ing rules, deciding policy, and helping to solve problems.

We have regular structured classes in the morning at the Free School. The children discuss with their homeroom teacher what they are going to do each day. It is not the method or outward structure which is important, however, but the relationships. In the context of relationships built on mutual trust and respect, the adults can guide children toward enriching, growing experiences. The basic processes at the school are interaction and communication. We recognize that children learn from each other and from their interaction with adults. The subject matter comes from the students' experiences; it is real, vital, and continuous with their pursuits. Dewey refutes the notion that the mind is something complete in itself and just needs to be applied to ready-made objects and topics for knowledge to result. He says over and over again that true knowledge comes from activity which is generated from deep interest and activity which is the child's own. This can be learning to read, writing a story, or doing math.

At the Free School, we have learned to let this learning of "basic skills" be the child's process, with us as guides. It can be in a traditional context (basal readers, skillbooks) or in the context of a special interest: the desert, the old times, animals, putting a newspaper together, etc. Either way, upon observing children at work at our school, one has the sense that they are intensely interested in what they are doing.

Being with children for over fourteen years, we have learned from them and from each other how to create a teaching and learning

situation which is enriching for both adult and child, based on mutual respect and recognition of the roles involved. Out of this combination of the students' interests with adult guidance, subject matter is formed. Our belief is that learning how to read, write, and do math are exciting processes - more of a challenge for some than others, but a vital process nonetheless. Learning is the children's process; it is not a matter of performance for adults, for grades, or for approval.

At the Free School, children take an active role in their own research - learning and knowledge are not spoon-fed. We are continually coming from practice to theory and back to practice again. I did not do the experiment of trying out a specific theory at the school, because I am experimenting and rechecking to see whether what I do works most of the time. Problems arise naturally out of activity; possible solutions are thought of and some are carried out. This is a social process, where - if a problem arises - it is talked about with other adults and children, if appropriate. We don't have techniques and methods passed down from administrators; we notice what doesn't work and we change it.

The Free School is a place in which children and adults act intelligently; knowledge develops from this. There is no break between practice and theory, between subject matter and what is important in the lives of students and teachers. We sometimes meet and talk about what it feels like to have parents separate (generated by a student's having discussed it in class) or about nuclear war (because of what children have heard or because it is a deep interest

of one teacher's).

We have rabbits and one dies; it is dissected, and those who want to participate do. We haul wood into the furnace room and talk about fire. A boy invites only boys to his birthday party, and the girls talk about their hurt feelings. We talk about prejudice and how one's actions can affect other's feelings. A child comes to the Free School with an interest in electricity and he pursues it.

Every month, the elementary children spend a week at a farm in the Berkshires, maple sugaring, trailblazing, learning about farm life, and learning to live together. Dewey has often said that education is a social process, that intellectual organization is not an end in itself but a means by which human ties and bonds may be understood.[1]

This is education based on living experience, and it is made possible by adults who are willing to live with life's uncertainties, take risks, and see life in its actuality and potentiality; by adults who are willing to expand into possibility and stay centered; by adults who are able to experience group and individual tensions and accept them as life - joyous and exciting. The Free School is not a rigid, dead place like so many schools today which are split off from life and the pursuit of heartfelt interests.

The adults at the school have steadily been learning to be more open to themselves and to each other and to be in deeper contact with life, through using gestalt, bioenergetics, transactional analysis, and the option process. In a way, we've all been on a spiritual path - one which is individual but which involves the group

as well; our journey is grounded in everyday living and working together.

As we begin to see our own magnificence, we can create the space for the children to experience theirs and thrive! I see John Dewey's philosophy very much in evidence in our community - in our commitment to each other as a group, and in our willingness to risk, experiment, and learn from each other and to use our hearts, minds, and bodies at every possible moment to experience life's richness.

My only criticism of John Dewey is that his writing is difficult to read, and thus easily misinterpreted, as it has been by people in progressive education. These people thought that learning from experience meant disregarding structure, limits, and traditional subject matter. Especially in *Experience and Education*, however, Dewey says that there can be structure and limits in experience and that past knowledge and traditional subjects (history, philosophy, and literature) illuminate and enhance our experience. On the other hand, I found his style to be a challenge - it was as if I had to scale a wall in order to fully experience this man's wisdom.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Dewey, *Education and Experience* (New York: Collier Books), p. 83.

Chapter IV. Conclusion

Piaget came to his work with an idea about growth from his experiences in biology and the effects of environment on development. He listened and observed carefully, gathering evidence for a theory of an inner process of intellectual development. To me, Piaget is a naturalist, looking with wonder at children, interacting with them, and trying different experiments to see the reaction. Piaget tries a stimulus and notes the response, stating that a child would not respond unless he/she had the capability to do so.

It seems to me that Piaget was investigating a process for which he had much respect. He looked deeply into children's minds and, from what he learned, wrote criticisms of how children are dealt with in schools; this helped him develop some solutions. But education was not his major focus; he was a scientist first, focusing on an inner, subjective world, with his theory coming from his work.

Skinner approaches teaching and learning from the viewpoint of a laboratory scientist, focusing on an outer, objective world. He was empirical, willing not to infer but to record observations about what he experienced through his senses. But Skinner was not content to just observe, because he wasn't interested in natural habitats; he was interested in controlling and predicting, as one does with laboratory experiments.

I don't know whether Skinner realized that he was looking at

something which had its own life and integrity. He felt that human beings - if left on their own - would destroy the planet. This might be true, but his solution was to control. He saw that all behavior was controlled by reinforcements, and thought that it was a good idea to have everything up front and conscious. Skinner did not have much faith in people's abilities to regulate their own reinforcements without same sort of outer control.

Skinner's method was to take an organism from its natural environment, reduce the variables, isolate behavior, control it, and make predictions. More and more, however, we are seeing that taking something in isolation and looking at bits and pieces of behavior is a dead end. The new physics tells us that it is not possible to observe something without changing it in some way.[1] Perhaps I can say that Skinner was too analytical, totally looking at cause and effect instead of seeing larger patterns.

Skinner did not see living things as having their own paths. His lack of respect for his subjects is what concerns me about the use of behavior modification in schools. It is dehumanizing, in that it robs those using it and being used by it of their trust and sense of wonder in each other. Piaget had a sense of awe and wonder when he worked with children; Skinner had none. Wonder cannot be experienced through the rational, analytical part of us; we feel it through our intuitive ability.

Dewey comes from a deep philosophical and practical tradition, bringing empirical facts and the inner subjective world together in his concept of experience. He saw the analytical and the

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intuitive, looking at the wholeness of things and at life in its richest meaning; he saw the outer objective world and the inner subjective one as intimately bound together.

A human being, according to Dewey, is not an isolated, growing being, but a profoundly social being whose life is intertwined with others. Our socialness makes us what we are. He looks at the whole of human nature, then at how education fits into this. It cannot be alien to life, because it is the way in which many of life's traditions are passed on.

When Dewey looked at schools, however, he saw them as they are - huge buildings, holding six hundred or more children stuffed into chairs and being fed ready-made knowledge for rewards and punishments. Dewey saw traditional education as having little respect for inner process, social interactions, and the development of real intelligence. How does this relate to life?

Piaget, Skinner, and Dewey are critical of education. I prefer Dewey's solution, which is not to borrow ideas and apply them, but to think intelligently of one's own solutions coming from one's own practice, from *being there* in day-to-day reality. For some reason, being there is not easy for teachers who are taught theory before they practice. In our society, we find safety in someone else's ideas. Dewey said that we create our universe to fit our beliefs, instead of seeing what's out there with awe and wonder at its variability and permanence. We should experiment and change what we can, accept what we cannot change, and change ourselves in the process; this way of being takes courage.

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There are no easy answers for teaching and learning - these form a way of life, and are not somethi[illegible] picked up at a workshop or done five hours a day, with breaks in the teachers' lounge. The processes of teaching and learning constitute a clearheaded way of being, and until teachers are willing to discover this way, we will have schools devoid of the excitement of living. So I end this paper with a clearer idea of the educative process, and what it takes to be part of it. It is a challenge and a joy.

FOOTNOTES

[1]John Dewey *Experience and Nature*, p. 73

This is the last of the three sections of this paper, which was originally submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at Norwich College/Vermont College in 1984.

Rosalie Angela Bianchi was a teacher at The Free School from 1973 to 1988, editor of the Newsletter of the NCACS from 1985 to 1988, and a member of the Board of NCACS for one term during the same time period. Rosalie's article, "Learning, Relationships and 'Burnout'" appeared in the very first issue of *ΣΚΟΛΕ* in the fall of 1985.

QUOTES IN CONTEXT:

For the profound and far-reaching changes that are required now, we have to make a fundamental shift in our assumptions ... and consequently in the ways we organize our common life. A whole new sense of who we are in relation to our world is emerging.

Joanna Macy

I do not pretend to live a life of integrity, but I do aspire in that direction. A life in which each gesture cuts through all the layers of existence cleanly, in which heart, politics, spirit and land are attended to in the economy of a single movement.

Deena Metzger

If I go as a Hindu, I will meet a Muslim or a Christian. If I go as a socialist, I'll meet a capitalist. If I go as a brown man, I'll meet a black man or a white man. But if I go as a human being, I'll meet only human beings.

Satish Kumar

People need to see that their drops in the bucket are *filling up* the bucket.

Robert Gilman, Founding Editor of *In Context*

***QUOTES IN CONTEXT, a Quarterly of Humane Sustainable Culture*, from which these quotations are drawn, comes out of the amazing group out there in Bainbridge, Washington known as Earth-stewards, from whom I also draw many of my EARTHWATCH items.**

Danaan Parry, the founder and spiritual leader of the parent

group also publishes books (e.g., *The Essene Book of Days, 1991*) video and audio tapes on such varied topics as the Essenes; becoming a warrior of the heart (the training of a peace professional); high wire trapeze work as a model of change; international tree-planting in cities - and many other amazing efforts at bringing about the needed changes of "deep ecology." Write P.O. Box 11470, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110-5470 to subscribe to *In Context*, or Holyearth Foundation/Earth-stewards Network, P.O. Box 10697, to join the Network. Please do join! And urge your school kids and parents to do likewise! It takes all of us!

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LETTERS:

Dear Mary,

Thanks for remembering me - and for your good letter. Here's what I believe to be at stake with vouchers and "choice" plans:

In theory, as an abstract notion, it's appealing. As you know, in 1970, both Illich and I found the notion of great interest as it seemed to open up a way for grass-roots groups in free schools and the life to enter competition with the public schools.

But any abstract idea exists in a specific context, and the context now in 1990 is a sinister trend -- fanned by Bush and Reagan and the right-wing churches -- to give the white or wealthy ways of opting out of contact with poor children. "Privatization" is the banner of this movement, and not just in education, but particularly in education. It's not coincidence that the strongest thrust for "schools of choice" has come from people who oppose desegregation, public welfare, housing subsidies, prenatal care and Medicaid and women's rights. The very few blacks who support the choice idea tend to be those who are on good terms with the Reaganites. The strongest support for choice comes from the Heritage Foundation - the most reactionary think tank in the nation.

So, when former liberals and free school people join the choice bandwagon, they find themselves in bed with people like George Bush, Lauro Cavazos, Pat Robertson, Bill Bennett and John Silber. While some of these folks (Joe Nathan, for example) are entirely decent people, they are nonetheless supporting an essentially right-wing agenda. The notion that a choice plan will provide poor children with real options would be more believable if serious steps were being contemplated to enable black kids, for example, to be given transportation to white districts or if serious efforts were proposed to educate their parents to exploit the opportunity. This, however, is no part of the agenda. By and large, the only non-white families that have profited from choice are relatively affluent and middle-class. So, in effect, it represents another way of draining off the middle class or even the most savvy of the poor but leaving the

rock-bottom poor more isolated even than before.

The first use of the term "freedom of choice," by the way, was in the South after the *Brown* decision, when the white communities created white academies to flee desegregation. The same term surfaced in Boston in the 1970's after the courts desegregation order. The author of the best-known voucher book is, of course, Milton Friedman, the right-wing economist who counseled the fascist Pinochet regime in Chile. Many of the liberal choice-backers of today seem to suffer from historical amnesia. They betray the kinds of principles they would have died for twenty years ago. I find this sad and troubling and I believe that we should fight this trend with all our energy and strength.

Love to you, as always,
Jonathan [Kozol]

Dear Mary,

Thanks for your last re-subscription letter. I think one of the answers to your query is that we've all forgotten the joy of "letters"; reading and writing are passé; we are now fast becoming a video culture and I would respect journals all over are having hard times.

You and the Coalition offer something so unique, it's a shame that we can't use it as a community-building tool - but this is a vast country and it's a daunting task to build a sense of community which is interrupted by thousands of miles and millions of advertisements.

I am enclosing two "articles" - the "intimacy" one will be in *HER [by now I'd like to believe all our subscribers are familiar with the acronym of Ron Miller's* ***Holistic Education Review*** -

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but I guess it never hurts to repeat things. Ed.] in the winter; and the other is the basis of a workshop I've given over the last ten years. Please use whatever is useful....

Take care,
Emanuel [Pariser]

Dear Mary,

Thanks for your letter about *ΣΚΟΛΕ*. I really identify with your frustration. I don't know the answer, but it is so difficult to keep going when you don't feel support or actual involvement.

I have been so impressed with the latest issues and really agree with a "professional" journal idea. I haven't sent articles, mostly because my energy is elsewhere, but also because I didn't want to monopolize space. I have already been printed in *ΣΚΟΛΕ* at least twice and would like to hear from others.

After the NERC [Northeastern Coalition] conference I'll take some copies to our local libraries and colleges if you'll bring me some extras. Is there a new one? I do have seven copies of Winter, 1990. We'll have a table for NCACS and *ΣΚΟΛΕ* at the conference, so maybe we'll generate more interest then....

Anyway - I'm listening and hoping you'll take heart and keep on keepin' on.

Love,
Sandy [Hurst]

Dear Mary,

This is a quick response to your letter of August 4, 1990. First, due to misreading upon my part, I frankly hadn't noted that the journal was separate from regular membership, the newsletter, etc.

Secondly, by, all means, I agree wholeheartedly that alternative educators need their own scholarly journal, especially at this time when, it seems to me, the time has arrived for alternative education to come into its own.

So, count me in. I will keep the possibility of articles in mind and try to contribute one from time to time.

Sincerely,
Dayle M. Bethel, Dean and Professor
of Education and Anthropology
Osaka Learning Center, Osaka, Japan,
a part of The International University,
Independence, Missouri

Dear Mary,

I didn't realize that your resignation from NCACS [*Note: I didn't resign from NCACS, but only from the Advisory Board when the current Board refused to accept Jerry Mintz as a member*] meant that you would continue as *ΣΚΟΛΕ* Editor. I'm *very* glad to hear it!

I'll try to send you a copy of the paper I will be presenting at AESA (American Education Studies Association) in Orlando, Florida, on November 3. The paper is entitled, "Would Dewey Make Kids Learn in School?"

Good luck on a much-needed journal.
Candy Landvoigt

Hi! Mary,

Thank you for your message. I enjoy it so much.

I hope you will come to Japan and visit us (our school also). We have many things that we can share to the Global (Alternative) Education with you in Japan. I meet so many people who would like to know it at summer gathering in Japan.

Anyway, let's meet in Japan in January. [*Chris Mercogliano and I will be visiting alternative schools in Japan in January. Yay!*]

Love,
Kazu [Kojima]

Dear Mary:

...I have belonged to NCACS for a decade and have subscribed to *ΣΚΟΑΕ* , from when you began it. Initially I paid with funds from the Center on Technology and Society (CTS) for a research project which studied networks in alternative education. Eventually CTS, which I founded in 1976, ran out of all funding, but I have continued it as a vehicle for my multi-disciplinary research. After CTS ran out of funds, I worked full-time for another research center and saved money to become an unpaid researcher. Two months ago, I left the center to begin writing a book on technology, society and spirituality that will include discussions of people networking and the alternative schools movement.

Since I was very impressed by many of the innovators and networking efforts in the alternative schools movement, I want to keep in touch with it. I do this mainly through belonging to NCACS and subscribing to *ΣΚΟΑΕ*, even though I am not an alternative educator....

In 1972-74, I was the co-founder and editor of a not-for-profit illustrated magazine in education which ran out of funding after three issues. (I thought it was a beautiful magazine, and ended up contributing $12,()00 of my own money to it as well as a year of unpaid work.) In addition, I have researched the fates of many newsletters (most of them now discontinued) as part of the 65

networks of innovators I have studied. Unfortunately, most magazines and newsletters either must be subsidized by large organizations or be put out as labors of love by highly dedicated people like you. Despite this "finding" of mine, I plan to start a journal on technology, society and spirituality after getting my book published. As a result, I have followed the progress of *ΣKOAE* with personal interest. I pray you get enough renewals and/or new subscriptions to keep publishing.

I will be glad to resubscribe to *ΣKOAE* in Spring 1991 at my annual renewal time.

Love and Lots of Luck,
Allen Parker

Dear Mary,

It's Thanksgiving morning, and I have just read your letter of November sixteen, which arrived at school yesterday. I think this is an appropriate day and time to respond.

First of all, I want to tell you that we here at Sudbury Valley are delighted that you will continue to publish *ΣKOAE*, and that we will continue to get it. To be sure, it is a flawed journal. Just like every other journal, and every human venture. Unfortunately, neither you nor I nor any of our acquaintances has yet discovered the divine secret of living a perfect life, so we must put up with each others' imperfections with patience and good humor.

Just about the only people who can complain about the problems a journal is having are those who have never tried to put one out. Everybody has problems with submissions, with finding appropriate articles, with recalcitrant authors, with lousy printers and missed deadlines. So what?

The fact is, that if the gurus at NCACS over the past years had put a little thought and effort of their own into *ΣKOAE*, instead

of leaving all the work to you, the journal would have had a much bigger circulation and would have been drowning in articles.

As it is, you have been doing hard and valiant work, and we are all the beneficiaries of it.

The reason Thanksgiving is a good day to write to you is simple. On this day, we all take off a little time from our hectic lives to contemplate the blessings for which we are grateful. For myself, one of those blessings is the fact that there do exist, in this world, people like you who are brave and strong enough to have a dream and carry on the fight to make the dream come true; *and who have the staying power* to stick with it despite the constant brickbats that an indifferent or envious or malicious bunch of onlookers never tires of throwing at you. We have been in the thick of the struggle here at Sudbury Valley for about twenty-five years, and it's no easier today than it was when it started. Perhaps even a little more difficult, since we were once naive enough to expect that eventually people would accept us with a full heart. Well, more people accept us today than used to, and that is certainly the case for you! So keep fighting, and keep working! *Never retire!* Your fight is everyone's fight, and we must help each other in every way we can.

Love,
Dan Greenberg

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ΣΚΟΛΕ

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ΣΚΟΛΕ ("Sko-lay," meaning "school" as defined by the ancient Greeks, an activity conducted on an on-going basis, as part of the awakening of awareness and contact with one's world) appears twice a year. It publishes articles related to the subject of alternatives or innovations in education, critiques of other forms of education, theoretical considerations associated with schools, schooling, learning and teaching, as well as accounts of individual schools themselves and "how-to" articles. We welcome manuscripts by educators, interested by-standers, parents and thoughtful students of all ages. Interesting photographs showing activities connected with learning/teaching are also welcome, but will not be returned except under very unusual circumstances.

Material to be submitted for publication must be received by the November 1 and May 1 deadlines. Manuscripts will not be returned unless extreme emotional blackmail has been practiced by the author, and should be typed with nice black type. Best of all, put them on a Mac, and send us a disk! Send your material to Mary Leue, 72 Philip St., Albany, NY 12202.

Subscription rates are: $15/yr. for members of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools, $20 for non-members. For institutions the rates are $20/$25. For overseas subscription, add $6/yr. for mailing. Send international money order, please. Back issues of ΣΚΟΛΕ may be ordered from the above address, at $ 8.00 a copy.

ΣΚΟΛΕ

the journal of alternative education
Volume VII, No. 2 Summer, 1991.

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EDITORIAL COMMENT:

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES BEHIND THE NAME ΣΚΟΛΕ

The following editorial is reproduced from the Winter, 1988 issue of ΣΚΟΛΕ, being a statement of the philosophical principles adopted by the little group that originally proposed this journal and gave it its name at that gathering of the northeastern branch of the NCACS in the summer of 1985. Since the name ΣΚΟΛΕ has apparently felt mysterious to some of our subscribers, I thought it might help to reproduce the earlier statement.

This little periodical is now entering its third [sic] year of life, having begun with the Fall, 1985, issue - although presently biannual rather than quarterly. Looking back to that first issue, it is apparent that the scope of our publication has gradually enlarged to include educational issues wider than simply a focus on the development of children's skills and sensibilities - and properly so, it seems to this observer. After all, the name ΣΚΟΛΕ ("Sko-lay") originated in ancient Athens as a term designating the kind of dialectical activity first conducted by Socrates by buttonholing passers-by wherever he found himself and engaging them in a process known as the "Socratic method" of question and answer, gradually wringing from them either a confession of ignorance or a final definition of the subject under discussion that would hold water.

This process gradually evolved into the method of engaging in friendly conversation interspersed with question and answer which we can still follow in Plato's dialogues - the Academy - founded some twenty years after Socrates' death. Plato's Academy became, according to B.A.G. Fuller (*A History of Philosophy*, Holt, 1955) "the first university in Europe," focusing on his notion of The Republic as "an ideal commonwealth, of whose constitution it was a fundamental article that the rulers should be men of philo-

sophic training and vision, conversant with the immutable principles upon which all real being and all right action rest."

The curriculum of the Academy covered a wide variety of subjects ranging from politics to metaphysics, the nature of knowledge, ethics and immortality. It is with this broad definition of "school" that this journal is concerned, although its primary focus will always be on what might be designated "primal learning," the early learning that must of necessity come first, and on which all subsequent learning rests. Plato believed in the necessity of "edifying influences" on the young, particularly those of poetry and music - especially learning to play a musical instrument. John Holt might be said to have carried Plato's belief to its humanistic conclusion (in *Never Too Late*), warning even while extolling the value of music and learning to play an instrument:

> Most of all, I want to combat the idea that any disciplined and demanding activity, above all music, can never grow out of love, joy and free choice, but must be rooted in forced exposure, coercion and threat... nothing is more certain to make most people ignore or even hate great music than trying to ram more and more of it down the throats of more and more children in compulsory classes and lessons. The idea is wrong in a larger sense; in the long run, love and joy are more enduring sources of discipline and commitment than any amount of bribe and threat, and it is only what C. Wright Mills called the "crackpot realism" of our times that keeps us from seeing, or even being willing to see, that this is so.

This "first principle" of voluntary choice of "the good" in all areas of life on earth has become in recent years far more an unchosen mandate than simply one of many options for living. During this period of time, planetary life has been undergoing a process of accelerated change of a paradoxical kind, I believe, moving simultaneously in two diametrically opposing directions - one, a growing sensitization to and awareness of the delicacy, beauty and vulnerability of our common ground, the earth, as our Mother - the other an equally increasing rate of indifferently mindless pollution of her air, water and land. She is becoming, unwillingly, more and more unable to sustain life! Using the paradigm of the stock market, participation in which one might liken

in its addictiveness to the unnaturally heightened physiological/psychic effects of cocaine or heroine usage, the crash came to most people totally unanticipated, a terrific shock! And yet, the warning signs of economic disease were surely evident to those who had the capacity to look and listen! Can we look at the global evidence of coming ecological (let alone political and economic) disaster before it is upon us? It is "ΣΚΟΛΕ" at a global level of awareness which becomes mandatory at this juncture.

I hope you can read this issue in the light of this statement. It is my profound belief that one of the most significant issues we face as global citizens is how to distinguish between our passions, our passionate beliefs, principles, convictions - which I certainly wouldn't want to give up! - and what is is going to take to learn to live and work together to save the planet, let alone our little lives and careers. Phil Gang's article, "*Educating for Peace*," and Ken Lebensold's letter at the end of the journal both come out of a tradition which insists that truly holistic education must include the context of our human lives as part of a universal context which includes the spiritual dimension as its true setting. Ron Miller's *Holistic Education Review* arises from a basis within the same context, and emphasizes the crucial importance of making bridges between and among the many models for learning which have arisen historically in the industrialized nations of the world such as Montessori, Waldorf, Home, Progressive, Humanistic, Modern, Froebelian - and probably some others I can't think of.

Under the aegis of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools the issues of community control of policy-making was written into the original statement of principles formulated in in Chicago in 1976. It might be well to reproduce these statements and

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the historical context out of which they arose. I reproduce Pat Montgomery's statement of that history from the first directory of the Coalition for 1981-2, published at Clonlara, Pat's school:

In May 1976, at the "Education for Change" conference of the Alternative Schools Network in Chicago, representatives from several hundred alternative programs laid the initial groundwork for a national coalition of alternative community schools. They drafted the following statement:

> **We are a national coalition of schools, groups and individuals committed to creating an egalitarian society by actively working against racism, sexism, ageism and all forms of social, political and economic oppression. The objectives of the Coalition are:**
>
> **1. To support an educational process which is alternative in intention, working to empower people to actively and collectively direct their lives.**
> **2. To support an educational process which is alternative in form, requiring the active control of education by students, parents, teachers and community members who are most directly affected.**
> **3. To support an educational process which is alternative in content, developing tools and skills to work for social change.**

For a few years the group was relatively inactive. In June 1978, some few met again, this time in Ann Arbor, Michigan, to adopt by-laws, file corporation papers and set a structural NCACS framework. Further planning was done at a meeting the following November in Denver, Colorado, where board members were elected—three from each region of the country (East, Middle, and West). It was at the Columbus, Ohio, 1979 Spring conference that the NCACS actually became a living, functioning entity. Over 100 people from ten states and Washington, D.C., shared a weekend of workshops: networking, home-study, young people's rights,funding and a variety of other activities geared toward continued communication. Enthusiasm and commitment to the purposes of NCACS grew...

Thus the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools (NCACS) was born, defining its purposes as empowerment through education, active, shared intra-institutional control and educational process as work for social change. By the time this directory came out, the Coalition was already five years old, and well-accepted by its members, as Pat's account makes very clear.

What happened in this country before 1976 Pat describes it as follows:

What is the National Coalition?

Well, in the beginning were the schools. Free schools or Freedom Schools. New schools. Community schools. Alternative schools. They were founded by parents, teachers, and students, either through a combination of efforts or by one person acting alone. Founders were inspired by A. S. Neill and his school, Summerhill, which he had opened in Leiston, England, in the 1920s. Others responded to the Civil Rights movement and the need for poor people to take control of their own communities. Others desired new lifestyles for themselves and their bairn.

The mid-sixties to mid-seventies saw the growth of thousands of new schools across the length and breadth of the U.S. and Canada. The people involved in these schools were, for the most part, completely unaware that people in other places were doing precisely the same as they—beginning independent alternative learning situations. Nor did the various schools necessarily resemble one another in programs, structures and policies. The only common factor was the founders' disenchantment with conventional schooling and desires to reform education or create completely new structures tuned to the needs of the people being served by them. For the most part, those involved with the new schools were unaware also that, historically, the roots of the new movement lay in the progressive education movement, "fathered" by John Dewey in the early decades of this century. They were very much aware of the current conditions in traditional education, of critics who denounced the status quo and of those who called for humanistic reform—Paul Goodman, John Holt, Carl Rogers, George Dennison, Herb Kohl, Jonathon Kozol, Ivan Illich and others.

Survival was the issue for fledgling schools, many of which lasted less than two years. They existed on a shoestring financially, drawing upon the personal savings of teachers and parents, charging tuition (usually the sole method of assuring income), and fundraising. Some few received corporation or government grants or private foundation money. Most operate in the same way today, for lack of any reliable outside sources of support.

One of the most common complications which prevent "reformist" organizations from accomplishing their aims is that of splintering and spending their institutional energy defining, redefining and arguing with each other over which splinter is the truly representative group. It is very distressing to me to see this happening to the Coalition, knowing that it is this very process that prevents its having any decisive role to play in getting the establishment to take alternative education seriously. It's not new to alternative school people - way before the Coalition, the in-fighting was going on - between the east coast city "radicals" like Jonathan Kozol and Larry Cole of LEAPschool and the belly button gazers from California like Michael Rossman and Peter Marin (guess which side I was on!). The Modern School Movement went down over a similar kind of controversy. With us it's the issue of whether or not it is good or bad to be "political," whether most Coalition schools are or are not in some degree compulsory. With John Holt and some of the other home schoolers it has been a question as to whether *any* school is good for kids! And you can make a darned good case for that argument!

The issues raised by each party in these controversies are eloquent and persuasive. When I read one, I am in agreement with what is being said - until I read another! Emanuel Pariser's Comm

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ity School, for example, operates out of a set of rules that would make Dan turn purple! But my surmise is that the school in Maine is a good school that *does very well what it sets out to do!* So how can anyone decide who or what is *right* - theoretically?

It is my belief that each school is different, that each reflects the character of the people who run it, and thus each one is likely to be unique. What might be very fine in one school might be a real manipulation in another. Any abstract model can become good or not good depending on the people who administer it. And by the same token, we can all give a good account of our schools based on impeccable models, and see other schools which follow different models as being bad for children. But believing this to be true doesn't necessarily make it true. Each of us has something of real importance to give the others, it seems to me.

In past issues of ΣΚΟΛΕ I have printed letters highly critical of Dan Greenberg's highly critical comments about other schools in the Coalition. Hey, I love Dan and I have no doubt that he is right in his thinking! And yet, there is a tremendous amount of value to be found in schools that operate differently! Dan's being right doesn't add up - for me - to other schools being necessarily wrong. We've all got a lot to learn from each other! See Dan's article offering an eloquent statement arising out of his advocacy of his non-compulsory model of education, Candy Landvoigt's splendid article offering Dewey as backup for the same model, and Josh Amundson's article on his experience as a teacher at Candy's school, Highland. If those

statements don't ring true for you, perhaps you're not listening very well. Read and think and learn! We have a huge job to do in the public domain, as the GATE people are saying.

I call most urgently to your attention the article by John Gatto spelling out the real problems we face as a society. Ken Lebensold has serious issues with Jonathan Kozol's hyper-political point of view - and I have no doubt but that Ken is right in many respects - but the problems Jonathan is reminding us of so passionately yet so patiently have yet to be addressed by most of us, as the environmental crisis is being similarly paid lip service to while we go on arguing over petty details of control and personality! What the GATE people (see Phil Gang's article) are saying is, WAKE UP!! Our house is on fire! This no time to fuss among ourselves! We have a great deal to learn about accomplishing our aims in an effective way. We need also to learn mutual tolerance and appreciation for the excellences we all exhibit! Perhaps the bottom line needs to be written by (of all people!) Chairman Mao when he said, "Let a thousand flowers bloom!" - or by the French saying, "Vive la différence!"

I'd love your views!

PROFILED SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL PEOPLE:

"...Nobody can know for certain what the right steps are in particular situations. Freedom is possible only after we commit ourselves to understanding the need to accept fundamental diversity."

—from *The Rapids of Change* by Robert Theobald

FROM GADFLY TO MAINSTREAM: THE NEW ORLEANS FREE SCHOOL 20 YEARS LATER
by Bob Ferris

We are sharing our 20 years of operation. As I reflect upon our journey over these years, I realize that the process has been long and difficult, though often rewarding. We started out with just an idea that became a reality. We now celebrate the adulthood of that idea.

Twenty years ago we were strong willed, full of energy, sure we were right and hell bent on changing the course of history. The only difference now is that we are older and no longer wild and crazy; we have become pensive and reflective. The innovator is no longer viewed as a law breaker and a rule bender, a rebel and a gadfly; rather, the innovator is now considered a law maker and a visionary, a thinker and a path finder.

When we started the Free School back in 1971 the key concept was that education must be relevant to the life of the child, that learning best occurs from the life involvement of the unique individual. I am proud today to be able to say that our program still offers an inquiry based, experiential and creative program. Instead of an emphasis on right answers, rigidity, routine and reproducing the known, the thrust of our program is to actively engage the

students in the learning process, to get them personally involved in their developmental knowledge.

Twenty years ago we argued that if America was to truly revitalize our public schools, we must seek and establish small schools. No student must be allowed to go through our schools anonymously - unnoticed. In this great industrialized nation of ours, we must guarantee that education will be an intensely personal experience for every student. John Goodlad in his now famous book, *A Place Called School,* stated, "What are the defensible reasons for operating an elementary school of more than a dozen teachers and 300 boys and girls? I can think of none." (Goodlad, 1984) Neither can I. I am happy to report that the New Orleans Free School's enrollment is at 300 students.

Twenty years ago we took a strong position for offering a non-graded program. We argued then as now that grades do little for the bright students while all too often crush and obliterate the struggling student. Dr. W. Edwards Deming, pioneer of the Total Quality movement, stated this concept poignantly,

"The prevailing system of management has destroyed our people. People are born with intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, dignity, curiosity to learn, joy in learning. The forces of destruction begin with the toddlers - a prize for the best Halloween costume, grades in school (my emphasis), gold stars - and on up through the university." (on the back cover of Peter Senge's The Fifth Discipline, 1990). Back in 1960 Marilyn Ferguson wrote, "In contrast to insects as someone said, human beings start out as butterflies and end up in cocoons." (*Aquarian Conspiracy,* 1960). What we at the Free School proffer is to provide the students a truly

Photo taken at The Free School, Albany, New York

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noncompetitive, cooperative enriched environment. We are offering children from New Orleans an environment which achieves academic progress without fear of traditional, harmful social comparisons which all too often lead to low self-esteem and self-image.

Grades are not as much of an issue today as they were back in 1971. The battle today is over standardized testing. Standardized tests are now so pervasive and powerful in our public schools, that they have greatly diminished the quality of our schools. William Glasser in his excellent little book, *The Quality School,* made the following statement:

> ...our boss-dominated educational establishment fails to recognize that quiet, conforming students who pass achievement tests that measure minimal knowledge and low-quality skills are not doing the high-quality schoolwork we need. Few of us may be able quickly or easily to define quality education, but most of us recognize that it is not what is measured by machine-scored achievement tests.
>
> The emphasis all too often is not on the joy, excitement and/or challenge of learning; rather, it is on skill development, mastery of isolated skills, sequence of skills, test taking skills, etc. Curricula are no longer based on interests, needs or curiosity but are dominated by what is on the tests. While we as educators are told not to cheat on these tests, we are instructed to teach what is on the tests. The result of this over emphasis on achievement tests is that it narrowly defines curricula content in an age when we must be concentrating on the expansion of knowledge through individuals who have a love for learning, who know how to learn, and who have thought processes intricate enough to deal with the complexities of the modern world. Testing has now reversed the process of learning. Instead of using testing to facilitate and evaluate learning, we are now using testing to test our ability to teach the test. Instead of learning dictating testing, testing is determining learning. Instead of

utilizing testing for human development, it has become the yardstick of human and/or program worth.

The Report of the National Commission on Testing and Public Policy, "From Gatekeeper to Gateway: Transforming Testing in America," described this massive testing mania as "ominous." It reports the following:

> The Commission conservatively estimates that each year the equivalent of over 20 million school days is given over to students in the nation's elementary and secondary schools simply taking standardized tests. And this figure does not include time devoted to test preparation. Far too much valuable teacher and student time is consumed by mandated state and district-level testing.

Our children deserve better. I wish I could report to you that at the Free School we were free from the shackles of mandated standardized testing. I cannot. To refuse to give these tests would simply be suicidal. I can report that we are still able to offer our more experiential based curricula but that we must also concentrate on test scores. I can also proclaim that I am publicly and professionally against this misuse of testing and strongly urge a move toward performance based individual and school-based assessment with a concentration "...not on one fallible indicator but on a range of relevant evidence." (*Gatekeeper*, 1990).

Twenty years ago we were on the outside looking in. We were strongly attacking bureaucratic control of schools and we were critical of corporate America. Today we are an integral part of that bureaucratic system. Now, instead of a concentration on attacking bureaucracy, our efforts remain on the cutting edge of education but with an emphasis on serving as a model of responsive, humanistic education for mostly low income students. We have even joined corporate America. We now have two business partners. The

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Chateau LeMoyne Holiday Inn has supported our school for the past few years. We recently formed a partnership with the law firm Middleberg, Riddle and Gianna. For their first program they are adopting our 6th grade "Teach For America" teacher in helping her to develop a law curriculum program for her 6th grade students. We have come to the realization that with society's complex and entrenched problems, only together can we make a difference.

Twenty years ago the Free School strongly proclaimed local control for schools at the school-site. Today I can proudly state that on the front burner of educational reform is moving power from the statehouse and the boardroom to the schoolhouse. John Chubb and Terry Moe's book *Politics, Markets and America's Schools* concluded that a major stumbling block to real school reform and/or success is a lack of autonomy. They proposed a plan of choice - one that cuts across the public-private school line - one which they argued moves schools from control by politics and bureaucracy to control by the marketplace.

Our large bureaucratic public school structure forces compliance and convergency on us all. This political and bureaucratic structure forces schools to be "compromised organizations," to use the words of the recent RAND study titled "High School With Character." The isolated few schools which work because of wealth and/or practices notwithstanding, the public school political structure's message is "This is the way you do it." School-site personnel are reduced to mental dwarfs forcing the best and the brightest to crawl into a hole and sacrifice principles and thoughts, leave the system or spend a life in the lonely position of being an adversary. It is no surprise that Peter Senge in his brilliant

book, *The Fifth Discipline,* made the following statement: "I came to realize why business is the focus of innovation in an open society. Despite whatever hold past thinking may have on the business mind, business has a freedom to experiment missing in the public sector..."

The message of Chubb and Moe's study is that schools must be given the freedom to experiment. A significant new paradigm is emerging throughout the United States and the world today. We must change our schools from convergent compliancy to divergent creative living organizations. Chubb and Moe are not talking about the rhetoric of change. School-based management, shared decision making, empowerment are all buzz words of the bureaucracy. Chubb and Moe are suggesting moving the power in empowerment to the schoolhouse. Even the RAND study concludes that the powers to be must "... agree to permit schools to manage themselves...Improvement of an organization that has been crushed by regulation, contracts, artificial incentive schemes, and reporting requirements cannot be accomplished by more of the same."

Do we have to sink the boat in order to rock it? I do not know. I do know that we must pop the cork to drink champagne. I also know that 20 years is a long time. Let's drink the champagne.

Thank you for your support all these years.

Robert M. Ferris, Ed.D
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If you would like to have a first-hand look at Bob's school, it has been beautifully filmed in action by Dorothy Fadiman in her award-winning video, "Why Do These Kids Love School?" We reproduce Bob's address with thanks.

Photo taken at The Free School, Albany, New York

EDUCATING FOR PEACE

by Phil Gang, PhD

GATE (Global Alliance for Transforming Education) organizer

Dateline: Copenhagen, 1937; Maria Montessori Convenes the international conference, *"Educate for Peace."*

Dateline: Italy, 1949; Garzanti Editore publishes *"Educazione e Pace"* by Maria Montessori

In the preface to that book, the editors write:

> Once outside Italy, the threat of war-feared by everyone in Europe-began to weigh heavily upon (Maria Montessori). Her profound concern did not stem from the political problem of war, but rather from the human problem. It moved her deeply, the same way the problem of the early years of childhood had haunted her in her youth..... Just as her experience with children had inspired her to uncover the laws of human development, so the problem of war now caused her to engage in a passionate search for new human truths. Taking as a point of departure her firm conviction that the child must be our teacher as well as her ideas regarding the free, harmonious, and balanced development of the individual human being, she moved on to consider the problems of human and social development and began a crusade in the name of education, proclaiming: *"Establishing a lasting peace is the work of education; all politics can do is keep us out of war."*
>
> As illuminating as flashes of lightning, her ideas brought hope to the countries of Europe. Political groups and associations rallied around her, embracing her faith in education and in the redemption to which children could lead the way.

In these troubled times of conflict and violence there is no more important work in the world than to reconstruct education... an education based on universal understanding and global-ecological responsibility. Politics have not kept us out of war. It is up to the educators of the world to create a lasting peace.

What are the elements of an educational approach that transform consciousness? Let me suggest a few windows of opportunity:

1. liberty
2. responsibility
3. spirituality
4. conscious evolution

Liberty. Liberty is the base of the human experience. Without the freedom to explore, investigate and discover, early humans might have remained at the level of their mammalian cousins. Instead, they were privileged to learn by doing... to make mistakes and to improve upon their life style. From an anthropological perspective, each human being recapitulates the life of the species. That is, we "experience" the same stages of development and their accompanying needs.

Through free choice children express and strengthen their individuality *"enabling"* the development of self confidence and integrity. Freedom of choice reinforces the construction of a strong will and independent thought. Children *construct* their individual wills by a process of self education... developing the will by making decisions.

Responsibility. The boundary of liberty is the domain of responsibility. Every human being needs opportunities to acquire social, physical, moral and spiritual responsibility. As children move through different stages, responsibility expands in an ever increasing circle, ultimately reaching what is known as *universal*

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responsibility. Article Seven of the Declaration of Human Responsibility for Peace and Sustainable Development[1] states:

> Of all living beings, human beings have the unique capacity to decide consciously whether to protect or harm the quality and conditions of life on Earth. In reflecting on the fact that they belong to the natural world and occupy a special position as participants in the evolution of natural processes, people can develop, on the basis of altruism, compassion and love, a sense of universal responsibility towards the world as an integral whole, towards the protection of nature and the promotion of the highest potential for change, with a view to creating these conditions which enable them to achieve the highest level of evolutionary potential.

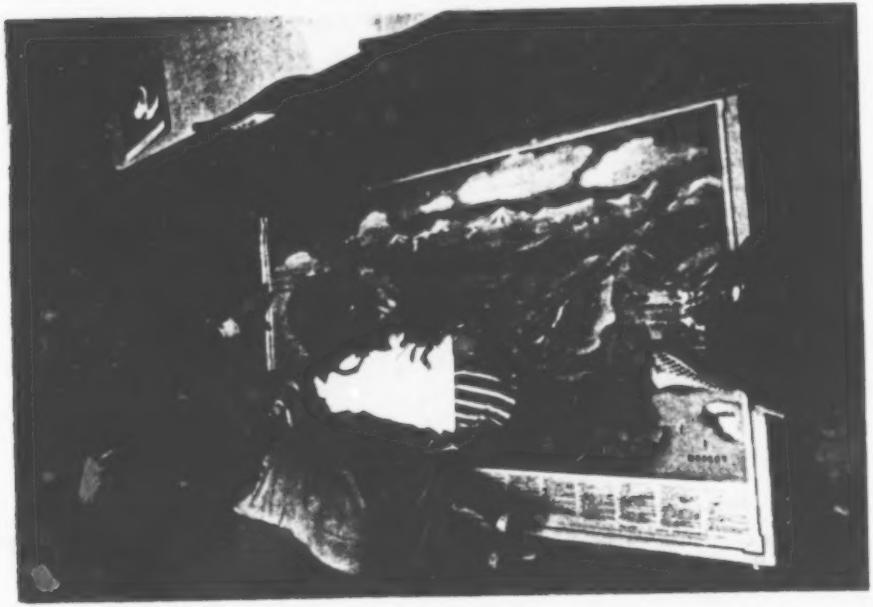
In the healthy school, responsibility is built upon through experience and natural consequences. Children are provided opportunities through social life experiences to align themselves with the highest values needed in a democratic society.

Spirituality. Spirituality is a respect and reverence for life and the unfolding consciousness of humanity. This is deeply imbedded in the holistic approach to education. If you take out the spiritual component the approach is reduced to a method or a subject and the whole point is missed. The evolution of higher order educational forms can progress only insofar as we address the need for spiritual renewal. In "New Genesis," Robert Muller writes:

> Spirituality starts with these questions: What is life? Why am I on this Earth? .....For what and to whom must I

[1] In October, 1989 this Declaration was presented to the United Nations by the Government of Costa Rica. (Document No. A/44/626)

Photo taken at The Free School, Albany, New York



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be grateful? .....What does my short-lived but so magnificent spark of consciousness mean in the universe?"

Educating for peace goes beyond preparation in knowledge and culture. It must consider the moral and ethical values of the "good" society. In every school subject there is an activity of the human spirit. It is this spiritual component that differentiates a holistic learning environment from the ordinary school. The latter operates at the ordinary level of manipulation while the former leads to higher levels of consciousness.

Conscious Evolution. At the heart of the notion of conscious evolution is the idea of responsibility. It is a recognition that *I* am part of a larger wholeness of life, a "great chain of being" as the Medieval scholars might put it, and that the well-being of that wholeness is my responsibility too.

This process begins with the very young child by creating an atmosphere of trust. Trust is the glue that empowers the infant to seek his or her own way in the world and to respect and trust others. Through exposure to the evolutionary cycle of the universe and life on Earth, elementary children discover the cosmic interdependencies that have given rise to consciousness and altruism. In a 1946 lecture Montessori proclaimed:

> Cosmic charity is universal. It requires the lifelong dedication of each man to all mankind.... It lifts up the hearts of all men and helps civilization rise to higher levels as it ensures the existence of each and all.
>
> The trees that purify the air, the herbs that capture vitamins from sunlight, the coral that filter the sea whose creatures would die if there were no such life forms to keep the water pure, the animals that populate the Earth are unconscious of their cosmic mission, but without them the harmony of creation would not exist and life would cease.

> This harmony, based on the needs of each and all, is of divine origin. That is why man has no conception of it and perceives only his immediate needs. But if man could raise his consciousness to a higher level he would awaken and be aware of the disinterested goodness and self sacrifice of his fellows.[2]
>
> If we educate children to see this, they will ready themselves to feel gratitude to all mankind. This is an affective aspect of our "cosmic education."

Older children can learn about conscious evolutionary service through directed studies, dialogue and activities that allow them to participate in service-oriented projects. Integral to this approach is exposure to indigenous peoples and their belief systems.

Conclusions. As educators we have no more important task than to work for the transformation of consciousness. We need to empower the rising generation with an understanding of personal, social and ecological responsibility as well as global interdependency. We need to model the holistic paradigm in our interactions with learners. We need to work towards creating human processes that enable.

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[2] In the 45 years since this was stated, there has been an acceleration of humanity's understanding of these principles. Although initially owned by the eastern metaphysicians and western spiritual leaders, today many people of the Earth community accept this reality. It is not only found in the "new age" movement, but in the heart of the scientific community. These ideas have been propelled to the forefront by modern day quantum physicists and biologists like Fritjof Capra and James Lovelock. Capra explains how physics has come full circle to underscore a spiritual reality. And Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis describes the earth as an interdependent living organism.

Perhaps the Persian Gulf call to arms might be the clarion call in disguise for the intensification of our work on behalf of the child.

Perhaps it is time to rededicate ourselves to actively pursue the vision of possibility for a new education, one that liberates and contributes to the evolution of humankind. With the year 2000 approaching, many people believe that humanity is ready for a major shift forward. Let us participate in this shift by opening the doors of human responsibility and global awareness to our planet's children.

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Phil Gang, who directs the Institute for Educational Studies in Atlanta, Georgia, is one of the founders, along with Nina Lynn and Ron Miller, of the newly organized Global Alliance for Transforming Education (GATE), which held its first meeting in Chicago last summer, attended by Jerry Mintz and Dave Lehman from the NCACS (among others).

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WOULD DEWEY MAKE CHILDREN LEARN IN SCHOOL?

by Charlotte N. Landvoigt

Despite an injunction to avoid personal recollections in this paper, I have a need to begin with one. The topic of this paper reminds me of the first time I was introduced to the work of John Dewey. I was in a "Foundations of Philosophy" course taught by Chris Eisele After reading *Experience and Education* and participating in lengthy class discussions, an unanswered question remained: "If a group of children was studying the Phoenicians and one child wanted to paint a picture in the back of the room, would that child be forced to join the group?"

To answer the question, I read more Dewey. The resulting paper, "Dewey's Esthetics as Experience in Education," was presented in 1980 at the Ohio Valley Philosophy of Education Society.[1] It seems that, after ten years, I have come full circle. In the intervening years, I have co-founded a school - giving me an opportunity to observe, from a Deweyian perspective, children learning alone and in groups. The school is entering its tenth year this year and has undoubtedly influenced both what I get from, and take to, reading Dewey.

Back to the question posed at the outset, would Dewey make children learn in school? The answer is quite clearly "no" since

[1] Eisele, J.C. and Landvoigt, C.N., "Dewey's Esthetics as Experience in Education," Ohio Valley Philosophy of Education Society, 1980.

Dewey believed it impossible to "make" children learn. However, to better understand Dewey's grounds for saying no, we must first understand the terms of the question. One of the best places to find a thorough discussion of making children learn is in Dewey's work, *Interest and Effort in Education*..[2]

According to Dewey, two camps have formed in education: those who believe that children should be made to learn through force of will - in other words, that children should be forced to sit at a task until they master it; and those who believe that children should be made to learn through the teacher creating appealing materials and surroundings (the Sesame Street approach) where facts and ideas are sugar coated for easier consumption. Dewey thought that both of these approaches shared the same fundamental misconception. As Dewey reflected,

> The common assumption is that of the externality of the object, idea, or end to be mastered to the self Because the object of end is assumed to be outside the self it has to be *made* interesting; to be surrounded with artificial stimuli and with fictitious inducements to attention. Or, because the object lies outside self, the sheer power of 'will,' the putting forth of effort without interest, has to be appealed to. The genuine principle of interest is the principle of recognized identity of the fact to be learned or the action proposed with the growing self; that it lies in the direction of the agent's own growth, and is therefore, imperiously demanded, if the agent is to be himself. Let this condition of identification once be secured, and we have neither to appeal to sheer

2 Dewey, John, *Interest and Effort in Education* , In Jo Ann Boydston (ed.), *The Middle Works, 1899-1924* , Vol. 7, 1912-1914, (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979).

> strength of will, nor to occupy ourselves with making things interesting.[3]

Thus, in Dewey's view, the use of the term "make" in conjunction with learning is nonsensical. "Making" a child do something assumes an external activity unrelated to the growth of the child. Learning cannot be forced from outside and attempts to do so are counterproductive. Dewey is explicit in his warnings about what will happen if we attempt to "make" children learn apart from their own interests.

> Externally, we have mechanical habits with no mental end or value Internally, we have random energy or mind-wandering, a sequence of ideas with no end at all, because they are not brought to a focus in action.[4]

The divided child - one whose outward behavior is forced or enticed to conform to the school's expectations while his or her internal self is unrelated to school activity - is a sad result of efforts of make children learn. Such children are denied the opportunity to develop habits of self-discipline and the increase in powers of execution which result from the development of their own interests. Instead of interacting with the environment through meaningful activities, children spend energy denying their interests and acquiescing to the will of another. This energy is wasted because such children are not developing their own wills and powers; their ability to follow their own purposes, realistically interacting with the

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[3] Ibid , p. 156.

[4] Ibid., p. 159.

environment and using increasingly appropriate means to achieve their ends sustains no growth at all.

Although vehemently condemning the concept, Dewey recognized the difficulty in changing the commonly held view that children must be made to learn. He felt that those who believe that children must be forced to do what they are told regardless of their own interests would not be easily dissuaded from that belief. Nor would those who believe that children are born bad and must be civilized through long training be easily discouraged from putting their ideas into practice. For, how could children become disciplined adults, capable of earning a living at routine jobs or completing difficult, long-term tasks without the early experience of being made to learn?

Dewey's rejoinder to these ideas in "Why Have Progressive Schools?" is instructive.

> The strong moralistic bias that colors these views seems to make it impossible for their holders to see that in giving meaning, in his own daily life, to the work a child does, there is actually a gain in the disciplinary value of the work, rather than a loss. There is gain because the work is immediately valuable and satisfactory to the child. Therefore his best effort goes into it and his critical powers and initiative are exercised and developed. Moral and intellectual powers increase in vigor when the force of the worker's spontaneous interest and desire to accomplish something are behind them. This is as true of children as of adults.[5]

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[5] Dewey, John, "Why Have Progressive Schools?", In Jo Ann Boydston (ed.), *The Later Works, 1925-1953*, Vol. 9, 1933-1934 (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), p. 155.

Photo taken at The Free School, Albany, New York

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Another factor leading to the mistaken idea that children should be made to learn in school is a lack of understanding of the child's process of development. Dewey felt that adults tend to forget the necessity of slow growth and push children to learn things before they are ready As he reflected in *Schools of Tomorrow,*

> We are continually uneasy about the things we adults know, and are afraid the child will never learn them unless they are drilled into him by instruction before he has any intellectual or practical use for them.[6]

The self-doubts of adults which lead to rushing the learning process of the child can be dangerous however.

> Maturity is the result of the slow growth of powers. Ripening takes time; it cannot be hurried without harm. The very meaning of childhood is that it is the time of growth, of developing. To despise the powers and needs of childhood, in behalf of the attainments of adult life, is therefore suicidal.[7]

Dewey condemned schools which encourage rapid development in the child at the expense of relaxed time for thought, immediate handling of new materials, or trial and error experimentation. He wrote in *Democracy and Education* that, "Even the kindergarten and Montessori techniques are so anxious to get at intellectual distinctions, without 'waste of time,' that they tend to ignore - or reduce - the immediate crude handling of the familiar

[6] Dewey, John, *Schools of Tomorrow,* in Jo Ann Boydston (ed), *The Middle Works, 1899-1924.* Vol. 8, 1915, (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), p. 213.

[7] Ibid., pp. 213-214.

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material of experience, and to introduce pupils at once to material which expresses the intellectual distinctions which adults have made.[8]

The way to avoid the problems inherent in attempts to make children learn is to build upon the genuine interests of each child. Dewey's emphasis on the role of the teacher as observer grows out of this necessity. Each child's self-initiated activity holds the key to further development of powers of growth. Since each child is a unique individual, the teacher must first get to know the child through his or her activity. Interest based activities are those in which the child engages "in a whole-hearted way." A unique self having needs, habits, and powers directed toward the activity, as well as materials and conditions upon which the activity takes place are the two necessary factors. As Dewey wrote,

> Wherever there is genuine interest, there is an identification of these two things. The person acting finds his own well-being bound up with the development of an object to its own issue.[9]

The process of building on children's interests in schools requires the presence of committed and capable teachers. Although Dewey placed great value on the teacher's part in interacting with children's activities in an educative way, he did not view the teacher

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[8] Dewey, John, *Democracy and Education*, In Jo Ann Boydston, (ed.), The Middle Works, 1899-1924, Vol. 9, 1916, (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980), p. 160.

[9] Dewey, John, *Interest and Effort in Education*, MW 7, p. 183.

or the school as the entities commonly found in most schooling today. In "Dewey Outlines Utopian Schools," he envisioned a future in which schools and teachers, as we know them, are obsolete.[10] In Dewey's Utopia, centers would be created where people of all ages could come together to carry on various types of activity. The spacious "assembly places" would have workshops, museums, laboratories, libraries, greenhouses, gardens and orchards, and home-like buildings. The community buildings would not be large (holding no more than 200) so that close personal interactions between participants would be possible.[11] Without classes or arbitrary divisions, children would gradually develop their interests with the help of others in the community. In a manner resembling apprenticeships, children would first watch older people's activities, then, as they demonstrated greater skill and responsibility, take a larger part in their chosen activities.[12]

At Dewey's centers, there would be no purposes or objectives, no teachers or pupils or lessons - only the "process of a developing life." The concept of making sure that children learn reading and writing skills and acquire subject matter in such areas as

[10] Dewey, John, "Dewey Outlines Utopian Schools," In Jo Ann Boydston, (ed.) *The Later Works, 1925-1953,* Vol, 9, 1933-1934, (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989).

[11] Ibid., p. 136.

[12] Ibid., p. 137.

geography, arithmetic, and history was considered silly by Dewey's Utopians. Upon Dewey's repeated questioning, he reported that,

> they asked whether it was true that in our day we had to have schools and teachers and examinations to make sure that babies learned to walk and to talk.[13]

In Dewey's Utopia, the concept of making children learn in schools would be replaced by children learning naturally in an active, supportive environment .The resulting adults would possess a sense of their own positive power, developed through the elimination of conditions which lead to feelings of fear, embarrassment, constraint, self-consciousness, failure, and incapacity.[14]

However, despite his depiction of Utopia, Dewey was a pragmatist. He was well aware that in existing society children spend a great deal of their time in schools. Therefore, he encouraged new and experimental school environments while making recommendations for the improvement of traditional schools. Some of Dewey's recommendations include the following.

1) The school environment should encourage children to find their own real life activities, and should include opportunities for concrete observation and experimentation. The adults in the school environment should not attempt to prematurely call into play the child's powers or try to make children specialize their powers before they are developmentally ready.

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[13] Ibid., p. 138.

[14] Ibid., p. 140.

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2) Freedom of physical mobility should be part of the school environment and opportunities should be provided for children to use material things to satisfy their needs. The school environment should include materials and conditions under which the materials can be used, without attempting to motivate children in a particular direction. Once children are engaged in a creative activity, adults can help them acquire standards to evaluate that work; however, teachers must primarily attempt to keep the creative attitude alive, not focus on perfecting the product of creative activity. Adult guidance should take the form of providing materials with which the child can interact, developing increasingly difficult lines of action, rather than overly emphasizing children's undesirable behaviors.

3) The school environment should include children in a society where moral choices can be made and their consequences reflected upon, and where children can take responsibility for concrete, real life situations. Teachers should help children understand and use their emotions in dealing with the social and physical environment, as well as providing an atmosphere of positive regard.[15]

As can be seen by the foregoing recommendations, Dewey sought to encourage schools and teachers to change the attitude of making children learn into an attitude of accepting and working with the child's developing powers.

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[15] Landvoigt, Charlotte N., *John Dewey's Concept of the Child*, (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms International, 1986), pp. 275-339.

CONCLUSION

Modern schools developed to serve the purpose of dealing with the diversity and complexity of life which arose with the industrial revolution. Prior to that, direct experience in the community provided most of the activities needed to educate children. As our society moves further into the post-industrial era, with an explosion of information gathering and processing, to rely on the concept of making children learn becomes increasingly counter-productive. There is no longer an acceptable body of information, which even assuming the possibility of programming children to make them learn it, can be counted on to be needed by the children when they reach adulthood. There is however, a process by which children do learn to develop their powers and habits - a process which they will continue to use throughout their lives. Learning based on genuine interest has the double advantage of being meaningful in the present as well as the future. Dewey has given us the framework to understand the process, it is up to us to develop the environments and interactive skills to help - not make children learn.

Candy Landvoigt (with her husband Steve) is the co-founder of The Highland School in Highland, West Virginia. This article - for which we are immensely grateful - is a copy of a paper Candy gave at a meeting of the American Education Studies Association in Orlando, Florida. She and Steve are members of a small group of school leaders or former school leaders - within and without the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools - who have consciously designed their schools on the basis of practicing as well as advocating total self-direction/governance in their schools and in their lives.

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HOW I LEARNED HOW TO WRITE
by Ellen Dewey Bennett Becker, Esq.

Master Tom Brown taught me how to write. We called him "Master" Tom because that is what you did in Quaker boarding school. Men were referred to as "Master" and women as "Teacher." So it was Master Tom and Teacher Rachel. He was my eleventh grade English teacher at a Quaker boarding school in 1961. What he taught me has lasted me throughout my life. My writing has been a mainstay for me in school, in later work as an editor of medical texts, in law school, and now as a practicing lawyer. I'll tell you some of my war stories later. For right now let me tell you what I remember.

I remember his method very clearly. As for his attitude, I never thought about it and I wasn't particularly close to him, so it had nothing to do with a close personal relationship. What I do remember is that he had an intention of teaching us to write clearly and he went right for it. I also remember feeling that he never talked or taught down to us. He never condescended. He meant to teach us to write well, he believed we could do it, and he didn't stop with less.

The method was fairly straight forward. He had us pick a topic and write a good healthy length essay. We did this twice during the year. The essay must have been at least ten pages long, maybe twenty. We did it in stages and he reviewed every stage. We were to research it and put our research on three by five cards (with notes and source) which we submitted to him. He had us write up

an outline from our three by fives of how our essay was to go and he looked the outline over and made comments. I believe from his comments about the outline we may even have had to go back and do more research to fill in areas that were not complete enough. Then he had us write up a first draft and submit it for comments. Perhaps more research occurred here and more three by five cards. (Every idea we used in the paper had to be backed up by a three by five card). Then we took his comments and wrote up a final draft and submitted it with everything together - final draft, first draft, outline and supporting three by five cards. We may even have had to submit two drafts before the final.

The method has stuck with me and served me inordinately well. Ever afterwards, I have been an excellent exam taker. Essay questions? No problem. Without fail since that date, before I starting writing an essay question on an exam I make a little sketchy outline at the top of my paper and follow it in writing my response. I have done very well in school. I graduated cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Michigan. My English professor at the University of Michigan encouraged me to major in English because he liked the way I wrote. In law school, I did well enough to get on law review. There I wrote an article for which I received the Scribes Award, an award for the best written law review article of that year in the school. My article was reprinted in a national specialty law digest. I graduated cum laude in the top 10% of my class at law school. In my final semester in law school when I had just birthed my first child and was writing essays in two courses to avoid having to take exams, I wrote both papers practically off the cuff using this method. I sat down with a typewriter, read through

the material, made an outline of how I wanted the ideas to flow as far ahead as I could see and then just typed the essay right into the final form, first cut. I got A's on both essays written this way.

When I think about the way his teaching affected me, I see that my mind was open to his comments. I was able to view them as feedback, not as criticism. Often his comments were written, but I never felt shamed by his information. Always I felt I was being helped to do better, not graded. I believe his "stages" method for the research essay permitted him to have so much input into the product before it reached final form that you felt as though you had been "helped" to produce the product, rather than asked to step through an area pock-marked with traps for the unwary.

He must have had us write shorter essays for comment before we launched into the big research papers, because I remember one other thing he taught me about my writing that has stayed with me since then. He pointed out to me that I often wrote an idea *several times* before going on to the next as if I wasn't sure someone was really listening the first time. The pattern was totally unconscious before this time. But he gently but persistently pointed this out to me every time I did it. I believe it was a bit of a shock to me to have someone observe what I was doing, but I never felt shamed for it. I felt *seen*... as though for the first time. And I began to notice myself doing it the next time.

How can I thank such a person? I guess I'd have to say that his ability to teach this way came out of who he was. He was an unassuming person, intent on his task. Uncompromising, persistent and with the total belief that we could write well. He managed to engender the belief in me that we were working on something

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together. I've never had a better writing teacher anywhere. He could have taught college writing just as well without altering a thing he did.

Ellen Becker was raised as a Quaker and attended the Westtown School, a Quaker boarding school in Westtown, Pennsylvania, in 1961 and 1962. She is currently a lawyer in partnership with her husband, and practices Family and Matrimonial Law. She has two children, who go to the Free School in Albany, New York. This essay comes out of an exploration of what constitutes good teaching, drawing on her own strengths as a source, acknowledging her own good teachers as a source of that strength.

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PROFILED SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL PEOPLE:

BACK TO BASICS
by Dan Greenberg, Sudbury Valley School

There is no shortage of articles, year in and year out, that go to great lengths to tell us what's wrong with the Right. I have long looked in vain for a companion piece, "What's wrong with the Left?" Could it be, I thought, that fixing only one-half of the political spectrum has real problems? Is the left, in fact, in need of no examination?

It took a while to recognize why the omission had taken place. It is not enough to pinpoint what's wrong with the left. the difficulty lies in finding a clear focus, where issues are simple and well-defined, rather than making do with a catalog of unrelated complaints that add up to nothing. For when it comes right down to it, the root problems of the left do not lie in this or that political position, but rather in its perception of human nature; and nowhere is this better seen than in the relation between the left and education.

Let's step back for a moment for a little perspective. We live in a country that vaunts its devotion to personal freedom, to human rights and to fully equal representation for all people in the governing process. These basic values are implied in our Constitution, and in its development over the years through amendment, through legislation, and through judicial interpretation. The highly imperfect concretization of these values in everyday life forms a recurring theme in the left's critique of American society. Why, the, have the schools been exempt from thunderous attack?

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School, from K to 13 and on beyond stands as a mockery of fundamental American values. No institution exists that better represents the world view of authoritarianism. Students are shorn of their freedoms the moment they enroll; not only physical freedom to be wherever they wish and move as they desire, but more equally freedom of thought and expression. Students are requested to spend their intellectual energies on pursuits chosen by others; to focus their attention on matters determined by outsiders; and to limit their opinions to those found acceptable by their teachers. This curtailment of freedom is carefully controlled, and any signs of devotion to rebellion are dealt with through punishment, psychiatric treatment, and ultimately expulsion from the social fabric. When such restrictions occur in Nazi Germany, or France, Spain, or Pinochet's Chile, the left is quite rightly up in arms.

But when it comes to our schools , where is the left?

The abuse of students rights is total, and is legally condoned for the most part. Like slaves in an earlier era of American history, children have been found to be exempt from the protection of the Bill of Rights, both at home and in school. (The few exceptions prove the rule). They are not protected from search and seizure, nor are they granted trial by peers, etc. Students in school are essentially at the mercy of the arbitrary power of administrators, over whom they have no control.

Finally, the very concept of meaningful participation in the governing process is ludicrous in the school setting. Students are governed by adults in all that matters - and, to their consternation, an awful lot seems to matter, down to the clothing they wear! Children are not deemed competent to handle their own affairs, and the

prime value of their education? Do we marvel at people's indifference to suffering, to persecution, to servitude, when as children, they were imbued with the idea their own state of slavery was not worthy of protest? Do we wonder that people shun responsibility, when, as children, they were never given real responsibility for their actions.

Where is the left?

This question has bothered me for a long time, especially after I became involved some twenty years ago with a group of people in Framingham. Massachusetts (a town located some twenty miles west of Boston, midway to Worcester) who were trying to set up a school that embodied in its everyday practice the traditional values espoused by American political doctrine. We finally managed to establish our school - called Sudbury Valley School - after the river that flows through the area - and it has grown and thrived in the intervening years.

The school, unfortunately, is unique on the educational scene. It caters to students age four and up (usually not older than nineteen, but occasionally adults enroll). It treats them, one and all, as responsible persons, as full citizens of its community. Every student is entirely free to decide for themselves what they will do with their time. The campus is open; students come and go at will. All ages mix freely at all times. The students bear complete responsibility for their education and their actions. When they need assistance, they ask for it; the school is committed to supporting students' educational activities. But the school imposes no required courses, provides no guidance on its own initiative, and offers no grades or evaluations of any kind, unless the students ask for them.

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To put it simply, the school treats the students in fact as we would wish every citizen to be treated in theory.

Students possess all the rights guaranteed to adults. They are free to think what they wish, say what they wish, be where they wish. They have a right to trial by peers when they are accused of infractions of the rules.

The rules, and all aspects of the school's operation, are decided by the School Meeting, meeting once a week, in which every student and staff member has one vote. Since students outnumber staff ten to one, the fate of the school hangs on, heaven forfend, the good judgment of the majority of the community, just as it does in a democracy.

That the school works and works well, is now beyond question. Currently in its nineteenth year, it has a track record of graduates which it is justly proud. Its daily operation is smooth, the atmosphere is delightful, the adult staff is hard working and loyal.

Where is the left?

In 1968, when the school was founded, in the heyday of "alternative" schooling, the left took one look at us, and fled! It has taken me a long time to figure out why. Having done so, I also understood the answer to the question posed at the onset: What's wrong with the left?

The answer is simple: the left no longer roots itself in the *people*. Although its origins go back to great social philosophers whose main concern was the welfare of the masses, its modern adherents have long since abandoned even the pretense of having faith in the common man.

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On the contrary, the left has become increasingly the voice of an elitist group, bound by common partisan positions on most issues of the day, a group ultimately convinced of its own righteousness and of its destiny to be a guide to the world at large; of its destiny to fix the world, if you will, whether or not the world wants to be fixed.

Perhaps nowhere is the left's crucial weakness better demonstrated than in its standard litany *vis a vis* President Reagan. What sticks in the left's craw is the inescapable fact that a huge majority of the American electorate freely choose Mr. Reagan to be their president. Rather than analyse what deepseated needs of the majority are being met by the republican standard bearer, rather than analyze these needs and try to meet them through a different approach more in line with its own ethical values, the left, instead, speaks with contempt of the ignorant public who, in their bovine stupidity, dumbly elect an "actor" to the White House.

The left has forgotten, in other words, that its ultimate concern has always been the welfare of the little man, the forgotten man, the person as a person, not as a symbol - whom the powers of evil and greed have shunted aside and exploited. The person who

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earliest age the values we so desperately wish them to practice as adults, there is no hope for fixing the world. The child is the seed, the school the seedbed and the fruit will reflect its cultivation.

Dan Greenberg, co-founder (along with his wife Hanna) of Sudbury Valley School in Framingham, Massachusetts, in 1968, a school which is going strong in 1991 in spite of (or perhaps because of - or both?) the advocacy of a passionately practiced and (occasionally stridently) advocated version of the a-political-libertarian-Deweyan-Reichian-anarchistic self-governance model of "school" one of the strong cultural roots of which is so ably expounded by Candy Landvoigt on pages 16-26.

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TWO BY JERRY:

VIEW FROM THE FRINGE
by Jerry Mintz

Those of us who remain in alternative education know we are doing the right thing. We may be described as being on the fringe, but we know that we are at the center of true education, and that those in the mainstream are on the fringe of true education. It is not with a sense of arrogance or elitism that we may say that, but with a deep sadness that all the millions of other children and teachers cannot share in the wonder and excitement of our living-educational experiences. Our salaries are so low that we cannot really think of them as salaries, but rather as survival money. Just enough for our schools to survive and us with them. We tend to look at ourselves and our schools as a living unity. Who ever heard of a free school teachers' strike? Are there any other teachers who are so sure of the good that they and their schools are doing that they are willing to work for such minimal wages?

Yet we know that we are only working with a tiny fraction of the nation's children. We know that the ideas that work for us are not easily translatable to schools sometimes hundreds of times as big as ours. Certainly most of us would not trade places with a mainstream public school teacher. But there must be a way that the ways of doing things that work for us can be used in other, bigger schools. After all, the students and teachers there are also people like us, even though it often seems to us that they do not treat each other as people.

Photo taken at The Free School, Albany, New York

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In actual fact, we do not think of what we do as experimental. We think of it as reasonable, obvious, practical and logical. To us it is obvious that people should treat each other with respect, that students should have a say in what they want to learn, that children understand better when they can learn by direct experience. Why would anyone do it otherwise? We get to see the results, and the results are good. No one could make us do it differently. Perhaps people in the big schools don't get to see the results, or don't even dare to hope for them so they do what they're told they have to do to keep their jobs. We have no such worries. We know that if we ever wanted to do anything else, we'd make more money.

But still we feel guilty. We sometimes feel like we've found the secret and haven't worked very hard to tell people about it. We like the small classes, the trips and the travels, we like having children who like coming to school. We like teaching kids who don't fear honesty or responsibility, who will tell us in some way if something's wrong, and trust us somehow to help them make it right. For a true teacher this pauper's life is nirvana. So what can we do to let everyone in on this secret? That is a problem which we all have put off solving while we struggled to help our own schools survive. But it seems the time is coming when the secret of our schools will die with us unless we are able to figure out a way to share it with everyone, so they can help us and we can help them.

THE SCHOOL OF LIVING

Not many people have heard of the School of Living, yet it has been the parent of many significant movements . It is de-

centralist in philosophy, and has been low profile during its 55 year history. Nevertheless, spinoffs from this group have been prime movers in the health food, organic farming, land trust, alternative education, intentional communities, and environmental protection movements.

Its current mailing address is in Cochranville, PA, although its "administration" and governing committees are spread out over several states. In Cochranville lives one of the co-editors of its pioneering publication, "The Green Revolution." Her name is Ginny Green, and she lives on one of several pieces of land that is held in trust by the School of Living. Tom Greco is the other co-editor, and current President of the Board.

Ralph Bersodi, the originator of the idea of land trusts, was also the founder of the School of Living. In addition, he is also credited by some as being the father of consumer protection, having published his book, *The Advertising Age*, in 1925. The School of Living is also credited with being one of the first proponents of the back to the earth movement and environmentalism in general, which has led to the creation of the newer concepts of bioregionalism and permaculture.

The School of Living is deliberately devised to be decentralized. Its various committees have almost complete autonomy and new committees keep forming. For example: The recently formed committee on permaculture is an approach to environmental protection which has an eye to the long term needs of man to survive on this planet; Bersodi was an early experimenter in comodity based currency, which has led to current work on alternative currencies; The newly revitalized educational committee is now involved with

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documenting, coordinating, and promoting new and dramatic changes that are taking place in alternative education, in public and independent community schools, home education, and life-long learning.

Perhaps it is this decentralized and empowering approach which has enabled the school of living to spawn so many significant and relevant movements, while taking very little credit.

At a recent board meeting at an intentional community in Virginia, they decided that it was time to call more attention to the accomplishments of the School of Living, as it prepares its agenda for the seventh decade during which it has existed, the 90's. People who have followed the work of the School of Living have said, "If you want to know what the important new movements will be thirty years from now, find out what the School of Living is saying today."

Jerry Mintz is the former director of Shaker Mountain School in Burlington, Vermont, subsequently Executive Director of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools.

Jerry is now the editor and publisher of *AERO-GRAMME* (Alternative Education Resource Organization) a bi-monthly newsletter offering all sorts of rich sources of information relevant to alternative schoolers, views, news, updates, promotional materials and support, all couched in Jerry's own inimitable, cheerful, generous-spirited style and centered on people, not theories. You may order this splendid periodical from Jerry at 417 Roslyn Rd., Roslyn Heights, NY 11577, for $10/year if you also order any one of a number of parallel publications including ΣΧΟΑΕ.

WHY SCHOOLS DON'T EDUCATE
by John Gatto

(Text of a speech given on the occasion of the presentation of his Teacher of the Year award)

I accept this award on behalf of all the fine teachers I've known over the years who've struggled to make their transactions with children honorable ones: men and women who are never complacent, always questioning, always wrestling to define and redefine endlessly what the word "education" should mean. A "Teacher of the Year" is not the best teacher around—those people are too quiet to be easily uncovered—but a standard-bearer, symbolic of these private people who spend their lives gladly in the service of children. This is their award as well as mine.

We live in a time of great social crisis. Our children rank at the bottom of nineteen industrial nations in reading, writing, and arithmetic. The world's narcotic economy is based upon our own consumption of this commodity. If we didn't buy so many powdered dreams the business would collapse—and schools are an important sales outlet. Our teenage suicide rate is the highest in the world—and suicidal kids are rich kids for the most part, not the poor. In Manhattan seventy percent of all new marriages last less than five years.

Our school crisis is a reflection of this greater social crisis. We seem to have lost our identity. Children and old people are penned up and locked away from the business of the world to a degree without precedent; nobody talks to them anymore. Without children and old people mixing in daily life, a community has no

future and no past, only a continuous present. In fact, the name "community" hardly applies to the way we interact with each other. We live in networks, not communities, and everyone I know is lonely because of that. In some strange way school is a major actor in this tragedy, just as it is a major actor in the widening gulf among social classes. Using school as a sorting mechanism, we appear to be on the way to creating a caste system, complete with untouchables who wander through subway trains begging and sleep on the streets.

I've noticed a fascinating phenomenon in my twenty-five years of teaching—that schools and schooling are increasingly irrelevant to the great enterprises of the planet. No one believes anymore that scientists are trained in science classes, or politicians in civics classes, or poets in English classes. The truth is that schools don't really teach anything except how to obey orders. This is a great mystery to me because thousands of humane, caring people work in schools as teachers and aides and administrators, but the abstract logic of the institution overwhelms their individual contributions. Although teachers do care and do work very, very hard, the institution is psychopathic; it has no conscience. It rings a bell, and the young man in the middle of writing a poem must close his notebook and move to a different cell, where he learns that man and monkeys derive from a common ancestor.

Our form of compulsory schooling is an invention of the State of Massachusetts around 1850. It was resisted—sometimes with gun—by an estimated eighty percent of the Massachusetts population, the last outpost in Barnstable on Cape Cod not surrendering its children until the 1880s, when the area was seized by militia and children marched to school under guard.

Now here is a curious idea to ponder. Senator Ted Kennedy's office released a paper not too long ago claiming that prior to compulsory education the state literacy rate was ninety-eight percent, and after it the figure never again reached above ninety-one percent, where it stands in 1990. I hope that interests you.

Here is another curiosity to think about. The home-schooling movement has quietly grown to a size where one and a half million young people are being educated entirely by their own parents. Last month the education press reported the amazing news that children schooled at home seem to be five or even ten years ahead of their formally trained peers in their ability to think.

I don't think we'll get rid of schools anytime soon, certainly not in my lifetime, but if we're going to change what's rapidly becoming a disaster of ignorance, we need to realize that the school institution "schools" very well, but it does not "educate"—that's inherent in the design of the thing. It's not the fault of bad teachers or too little money spent. It's just impossible for education and schooling ever to be the same thing.

Schools were designed by Horace Mann and Bamas Sears and W.R.Harper of the University of Chicago and Thomdyke of Columbia Teachers College and others to be instruments of the scientific management of a mass population. Schools are intended to produce, through the application of formulae, formulaic human beings whose behavior can be predicted and controlled.

To a very great extent schools succeed in doing this. But our society is disintegrating, and in such a society the only successful people are self-reliant, confident, and individualistic —because the community life which protects the dependent and the weak is dead.

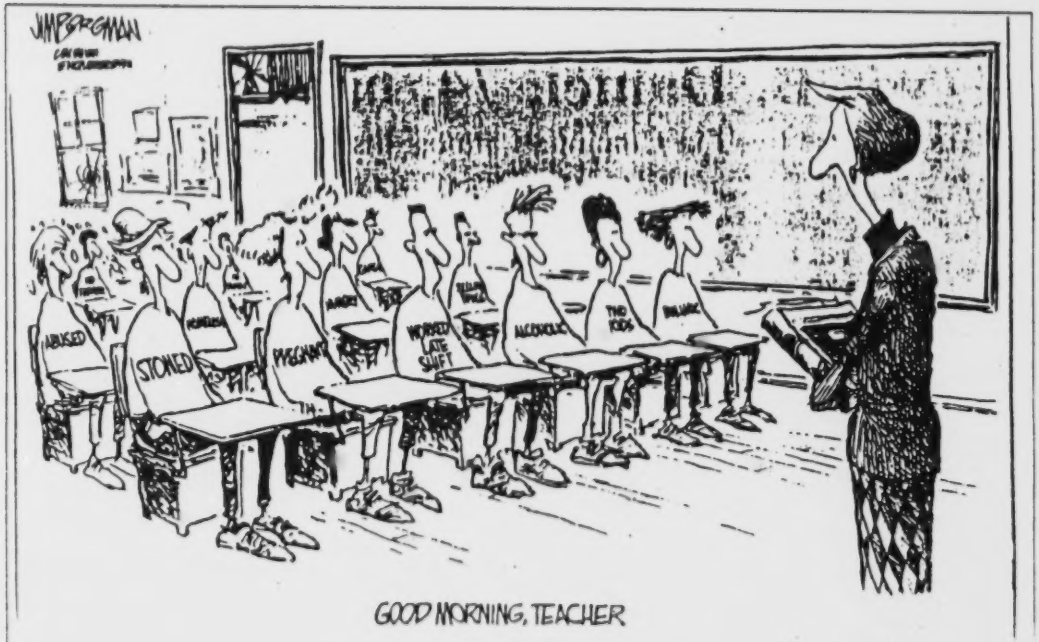
The products of schooling are, as I've said, irrelevant. Well-schooled people are irrelevant. They can sell film and razor blades, push paper and talk on telephones, or sit mindlessly before a flickering computer terminal, but as human beings they are useless—useless to others and useless to themselves.

The daily misery around us is, I think, in large measure caused by the fact that—as Paul Goodman put it thirty years ago—we force children to grow up absurd . Any reform in schooling has to deal with its absurdities.

It is absurd and anti-life to be part of a system that compels you to sit in confinement with people of exactly the same age and social class. That system effectively cuts you off from the immense diversity of life and the synergy of variety. It cuts you off from your own past and future, sealing you in a continuous present much the same way television does.

It is absurd and anti-life to be part of a system that compels you to listen to a stranger reading poetry when you want to learn to construct buildings, or to sit with a stranger discussing the construction of buildings when you want to read poetry. It is absurd and anti-life to move from cell to cell at the sound of a gong for every day of your youth, in an institution that allows you no privacy and even follows you into the sanctuary of your home, demanding that you do its "homework."

"How will they learn to read?!" you say, and my answer is, "Remember the lessons of Massachusetts. " When children are given whole lives instead of age-graded ones in cellblocks, they learn to read,write, and do arithmetic with ease if those things make sense in the life that unfolds around them.



GOOD MORNING, TEACHER

But keep in mind that in the United States almost nobody who reads, writes, or does arithmetic gets much respect. We are a land of talkers; we pay talkers the most and admire talkers the most and so our children talk constantly, following the public models of television and schoolteachers. It is very difficult to teach the "basics" anymore because they really aren't basic to the society we've made.

Two institutions at present control our children's lives—television and schooling, in that order. Both of these reduce the real world of wisdom, fortitude, temperance, and justice to a never-ending, non-stop abstraction. In centuries past the time of a child and adolescent would be occupied in real work, real charity, real adventures, and the real search for mentors who might teach what one really wanted to learn. A great deal of time was spent in community pursuits, practicing affection, meeting and studying every level of the community, learning how to make a home, and dozens of other tasks necessary to becoming a whole man or woman.

But here is the calculus of time the children I teach must deal with:

Out of the one hundred sixty-eight hours in each week, my children sleep fifty-six. That leaves them one hundred twelve hours a week out of which to fashion a self.

My children watch fifty-five hours of television a week, according to recent reports. That leaves them fifty-seven hours a week in which to grow up.

My children attend school thirty hours a week, use about eight hours getting ready, going and coming home, and spend an average of seven hours a week in homework—a total of forty-five hours. During that time they are under constant surveillance, have no

private time or private space, and are disciplined if they try to assert individuality in the use of time or space. That leaves twelve hours a week out of which to create a unique consciousness. Of course my kids eat, too, and that takes some time—not much, because we've lost the tradition of family dining. If we allot three hours a week to evening meals, we arrive at a net amount of private time for each child of nine hours.

It's not enough. It's not enough, is it? The richer the kid, of course, the less television he watches, but the rich kid's time is just as narrowly proscribed by a broader catalogue of commercial entertainments and his inevitable assignment to a series of private lessons in areas seldom of his choice.

And these things are, oddly enough, just a more cosmetic way to create dependent human beings, unable to fill their own hours, unable to initiate lines of meaning to give substance and pleasure to their existence. It's a national disease, this dependency and aimlessness, and I think schooling and television and lessons—the entire Chautauqua idea—have a lot to do with it.

Think of the things that are killing us as a nation: drugs, brainless competition, recreational sex, the pornography of violence, gambling, alcohol, and the worst pornography of all —lives devoted to buying things, accumulation as a philosophy. All are addictions of dependent personalities and that is what our brand of schooling must inevitably produce.

I want to tell you what the effect is on children of taking all their time—time they need to grow up—and forcing them to spend it on abstractions. No reform that doesn't attack these specific pathologies will be anything more than a facade.

1 . The children I teach are indifferent to the adult world . This defies the experience of thousands of years. A close study of what big people were up to was always the most exciting occupation of youth, but nobody wants to grow up these days, and who can blame them? Toys are us.

2. The children I teach have almost no curiosity, and what little they do have is transitory; they cannot concentrate for very long, even on things they choose to do. Can you see a connection between the bells ringing again and again to change classes and this phenomenon of evanescent attention?

3. The children I teach have a poor sense of the future, of how tomorrow is inextricably linked to today. They live in a continuous present; the exact moment they are in is the boundary of their consciousness.

4. The children I teach are a-historical; they have no sense of how the past has predestined their own present, limiting their choices, shaping their values and lives.

5. The children I teach are cruel to each other; they lack compassion for misfortune, they laugh at weakness, they have contempt for people whose need for help shows too plainly.

6. The children I teach are uneasy with intimacy or candor. They cannot deal with genuine intimacy because of a lifelong habit of preserving a secret self inside an outer personality made up of artificial bits and pieces of behavior borrowed from television, or acquired to manipulate teachers. Because they are not who they represent themselves to be, the disguise wears thin in the presence of intimacy, so intimate relationships have to be avoided.

7. The children I teach are materialistic, following the lead of schoolteachers who materialistically "grade" everything—and television mentors who offer everything in the world for sale.

8. The children I teach are dependent, passive, and timid in the presence of new challenges. This timidity is frequently masked by surface bravado, or by anger or aggressiveness, but underneath is a vacuum without fortitude.

I could name a few other conditions that school reform will have to tackle if our national decline is to be arrested, but by now you will have grasped my thesis, whether you agree with it or not. Either schools, television, or both have caused these pathologies. It's a simple matter of arithmetic. Between schooling and television, all the time children have is eaten up. That's what has destroyed the American family; it no longer is a factor in the education of its own children.

What can be done?

First, we need a ferocious national debate that doesn't quit, day after day, year after year, the kind of continuous emphasis that journalism finds boring. We need to scream and argue about this school thing until it is fixed or broken beyond repair, one or the other. If we can fix it, fine; if we cannot, then the success of home-schooling shows a different road that has great promise . Pouring the money back into family education might kill two birds with one stone, repairing families as it repairs children.

Genuine reform is possible, but it shouldn't cost anything. We need to rethink the fundamental premises of schooling and decide *what* it is we want all children to learn, and *why*. For one hundred forty years this nation has tried to impose objectives from a lofty

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command center made up of "experts," a central elite of social engineers. It hasn't worked. It won't work. It is a gross betrayal of the democratic promise that once made this nation a noble experiment. The Russian attempt to control Eastern Europe has exploded before our eyes. Our own attempt to impose the same sort of central orthodoxy, using the schools as an instrument, is also coming apart at the seams, albeit more slowly and painfully. It doesn't work because its fundamental premises are mechanical, antihuman, and hostile to family life. Lives can be controlled by machine education, but they will always fight back with weapons of social pathology—drugs, violence, self-destruction, indifference, and the symptoms I see in the children I teach.

It's high time we looked backward to regain an educational philosophy that works. One I like particularly well has been a favorite of the ruling classes of Europe for thousands of years. I think it works just as well for poor children as for rich ones. I use as much of it as I can manage in my own teaching; as much, that is, as I can get away with, given the present institution of compulsory schooling.

At the core of this elite system of education is the belief that self-knowledge is the only basis of true knowledge. Everywhere in this system, at every age, you will find arrangements that place the child *alone* in an unguided setting with a problem to solve. Sometimes the problem is fraught with great risks, such as the problem of galloping a horse or making it jump, but that, of course, is a problem successfully solved by thousands of elite children before the age of ten. Can you imagine anyone who had mastered such a challenge ever lacking confidence in his ability to do anything?

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Sometimes the problem is that of mastering solitude, as Thoreau did at Walden pond, or Einstein did in the Swiss customs house.

One of my former students, Roland Legiardi-Laura, though both his parents were dead and he had no inheritance, took a bicycle across the United States alone when he was hardly out of boyhood. Is it any wonder that in manhood he made a film about Nicaragua, although he had no money and no prior experience with film-making, and that it was an international awardwinner—even though his regular work was as a carpenter?

Right now we are taking from our children the time they need to develop self-knowledge. That has to stop. We have to invent school experiences that give a lot of that time back. We need to trust children from a very early age with independent study, perhaps arranged in school, but which takes place *away* from the institutional setting. We need to invent a curriculum where each kid has a chance to develop uniqueness and self-reliance.

A short time ago, I took seventy dollars and sent a twelve-year-old girl with her non-English speaking mother on a bus down the New Jersey coast. She took the police chief of Sea Bright to lunch and apologized for polluting his beach with a discarded Gatorade bottle. In exchange for this public apology I had arranged for the girl to have a one-day apprenticeship in small-town police procedures. A few days later, two more of my twelve-year-old kids traveled alone from Harlem to West 31st Street, where they began an apprenticeship with a newspaper editor. Next week, three of my kids will find themselves in the middle of the Jersey swamps at 6 in the morning studying the mind of a trucking company president as he dispatches eighteen-wheelers to Dallas, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

Are these "special" children in a "special" program? They're just nice kids from Central Harlem, bright and alert, but so badly schooled when they came to me that most of them couldn't add or subtract with any fluency. And not a single one knew the population of New York City, or how far it is from New York to California.

Does that worry me? Of course. But I am confident that as they gain self-knowledge they'll also become self-teachers— and only self-teaching has any lasting value.

We've got to give kids independent time right away because that is the key to self-knowledge, and we must reinvolve them with the real world as fast as possible so that the independent time can be spent on something other than more abstractions. This is an emergency. It requires drastic action to correct. Our children are dying like flies in our schools. Good schooling or bad schooling, it's all the same—irrelevant.

What else does a restructured school system need? It needs to stop being a parasite on the working community. I think we need to made community service a required part of schooling. It is the quickest way to give young children real responsibility.

For five years I ran a guerrilla school program where I had every kid, rich and poor, smart and dipsy, give three hundred twenty hours a year of hard community service. Dozens of those kids came back to me years later, and told me that this one experience changed their lives, taught them to see in new ways, to rethink goals and values. It happened when they were thirteen, in my Lab School program—only made possible because my rich school district was in chaos. When "stability" returned, the Lab closed. It was too

successful, at too small a cost, to be allowed to continue. We made the expensive, elite programs look bad.

There is no shortage of real problems in this city. Kids can be asked to help solve them in exchange for the respect and attention of the adult world. Good for kids, good for the rest of us.

Independent study, community service, adventures in experience, large doses of privacy and solitude, a thousand different apprenticeships—these are all powerful, cheap, and effective ways to start a real reform of schooling. But no large-scale reform is ever going to repair our damaged children and our damaged society until we force the idea of "school" open—to include family as the main engine of education. The Swedes realized this in 1976, when they effectively abandoned the system of adopting unwanted children and instead spent national time and treasure on reinforcing the original family so that children born to Swedes *were* wanted. They reduced the number of unwanted Swedish children from 6,000 in 1976 to fifteen in 1986. So it can be done. The Swedes just got tired of paying for the social wreckage caused by children not raised by their natural parents, so they did something about it. We can, too.

Family is the main engine of education. If we use schooling to break children away from parents—and make no mistake, that has been the central function of schools since John Cotton announced it as the purpose of the Bay Colony schools in 1650 and Horace Mann announced it as the purpose of Massachusetts schools in 1850—we're going to continue to have the horror show we have right now.

The curriculum of family is at the heart of any good life. We've gotten away from that curriculum—it's's time to return to it. The way to sanity in education is for our schools to take the lead in

releasing the stranglehold of institutions on family life, to promote during school time confluences of parent and child that will strengthen family bonds. That was my real purpose in sending the girl and her mother down the Jersey coast to meet the police chief.

I have many ideas to make a family curriculum, and my guess is that a lot of you will have many ideas, too, once you begin to think about it. Our greatest problem in getting the kind of grassroots thinking going that could reform schooling is that we have large, vested interests profiting from schooling just exactly as it is, despite rhetoric to the contrary.

We have to demand that new voices and new ideas get a hearing, my ideas and yours. We've all had a bellyful of authorized voices on television and in the press. A decadelong, free-for-all debate is called for now, not any more "expert" opinions. Experts in education have never been right; their "solutions" are expensive, self-serving, and always involve further centralization. Enough.

Time for a return to democracy, individuality, and family.

I've said my piece. Thank you.

John Gatto teaches seventh grade at Junior High School 54 on Manhattan's Upper West Side. He has been teaching in public schools for more than twenty-five years! - and was recently made winner of the Teacher of the Year Award for New York City. This is his acceptance speech. It was first published in *The Sun* magazine. I have reprinted from it from *A Voice for Children*, Volume 1, Number 3, Fall, 1990, P.O. Box 4143, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502, Edward M. Jones, editor, a splendid publiucation, to which I urge you to subscribe.

You may also subscribe to *The Sun* by writing them at 107 North Roberson Street, Chapel Hill, NC 27516. The price for a year - $30 - may seem high, but 1) it's a monthly; 2) it is superb!; and 3) like other precious things, it richly deserves your participation and support. As Sy Safransky, its editor says, "Subscriptions are the blood in the vein, the meat on the bone, the smile on the face of a healthy magazine."

POEMS:

AROUND OUR TABLE

For Stephen Fels, 1940-1989

He was coming out of the dark
To join us at our picnic table,
He was about to head back down
The thin corridors of waiting.
He might have cried,
"I don't need Belsen,
I have my body."
Instead he called,
"You may not recognise me, I
Am Stephen. I came to see you anyway."
But right away I knew the bones,
A quiet incandescence in our midst,
His face in a glow like a straining runner's
In the little light our candles made.

You who came through the August dark
Who came to us without your hair,
Without color, scarcely with flesh,
You walked around the corner to us
And cried "hello there" in the dark;
Before we could see, you called our names.
"You are Geoffrey, you are James,
You're Kate."
We did not know how joy
And fear could come together so
As one; in the unfeeling breeze
Of the unspeakable, your bright face
Like a lamp in the dark around our table.

And that was something, as one who finds
His father, years perhaps beyond
His death, in subway or crowded street,
A presence felt that may tell something
Or tell nothing, some commission
Or timely caution from beyond

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The grave, or maybe none; one who
In his devotion plays the fool
And fails to comprehend, just yet,
What he must do.
Stephen, you were
The message we waited for, glowing face
Like a lamp in the dark around our table.

—Stephen Sandy

Reprinted from Harvard Magazine

THREE BY MEIGHAN:

DEAR SACHIKO

I'm sitting here, in silent tears,
The hours that have seemed like years,
Thinking of my silent fears
And longing for dear Sachiko.

You had to leave and I know why,
Not a single day's gone by
But still I sit here and I cry
And wonder 'bout dear Sachiko.

Your family's gone away with you
But even before you left I knew
That they'd be back, your loving two,
But back without you, Sachiko.

I never knew how much I'd miss
The presence of your simple bliss
And now goodbye with just a kiss.
I'll always remember you, Sachiko.

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WHERE DO I BEGIN?

If I could *see* it, I could *challenge* it.
If I could *understand* it, I could *reason* with it.
If I could *face* it, I could *learn* its weaknesses.
But how can I *understand* what I cannot see?
And how can I *see* what I cannot face .
And how can I *face* what I do not understand?
Without understanding I cannot *learn* or *challenge* or *reason* .
Where do I begin?

WHAT IS THIS EMPTINESS?

What is this emptiness in my soul?
A power of which I have no control
It follows me
Wherever I go
What is this emptiness in my soul?

What is this madness
that I can't fight?
It crowds my view
It blurs my sight
there's no escape
in day or night
What is this madness
that I can't fight?

Meighan Carivan

Meighan Carivan, fourteen, graduated from the Free School in Albany at the end of her sixth year and went on to public junior high school. Now completing her sophomore high school year as a home schooler in the community as well as holding down two community jobs, she is looking at where she would like to complete her high school years.

Sachiko, now almost ready to give birth back home in Osaka, Japan, has been, along with her husband Satoshi

and son Seigo, an intern at the Free School this year. This couple has been a remarkable presence in the lives of the entire community. They hope to set up their own alternative school when they are resettled at home with their two children.

HAIKUS

Unnamed

A very hot day
a sparrow flutters its wings
orange sun glitters

At night it's quiet
in the woods I hear an owl
heart beats fast and light.

Fanon Frazier

Mountains

Walking at night
I saw a mountain, big, light
Like the light of God.

David Daniels

Boat Book

I open the tree
I am possessed by the words
ever traveling.

Elizabeth Carivan

Fanon, David and Elizabeth, former students at the Free School in Albany, New York, are all "out there" now making it splendidly in public school - as they often come back to tell us!

INTERVIEW WITH YAMASHITA KEIKO BY KATHY ARLYN SOKOL AND STEPHEN SULOWAY FOR THE KYOTO JOURNAL, WINTER 1991

When you were a child, your home was a very interesting place...

Yes. One of the foreigners who boarded with us was Professor Leon Herberts of Columbia University, a Buddhism specialist, and we were very good friends. He used to carry me on his shoulders to the Shinshindo coffee shop, and to the Kyoto University campus, where we would do things like cleaning Buddha images together. We had lots of fun together. Later his students came over from New York and stayed in our house. They were all beatniks, and some of them were interested in Zen. One of them used to go to school, and everywhere else, with his head covered up by a basket-type hat, like a *komuso* Zen priest. There was one Frenchman, an artist, who was always getting drunk and having trouble with the police. One student was a very nervous type and we would quarrel because I liked to tap my feet on the floor when I was studying. I realized when I was still very young that my outlook on life was going to be pretty different from other kids.

What do you remember most about your early education?

Definitely not school. My grandmother never insisted that I go to school. She thought school was only a sort of diversion. But attending dance class regularly was a given in my house, which had

its own studio. The studio served as not only a place to practice but as a salon where the foreign students, my grandmother, the teachers and I would muse on the transforming state of tradition. It was a very small, special society that held art and craft above academic education.

Thirty years ago in Kyoto that was a more commonly held view. Each family transferred the knowledge of their life's experience directly to their own children. The prime educating institutions were the family and the neighborhood. For at least ten years after the war, the Mombusho was still in a confused state and had not yet regulated the schools throughout Japan. School was not society.

Yet you went on to become a public school educator. What were your motivations?

I've been a teacher for nearly half my life. While attending Otani University, I was already teaching Japanese classical dance to more than 30 students. After graduating from university with a degree in Japanese folklore, I got married, had a child and then went on to get a certificate in elementary school education. I've been working with young children ever since.

During my first years in the Kyoto public school system I strove to become a model Mombusho teacher. I taught the official textbooks thoroughly within a short time. I organized my time well. I raised obedient students. I was told that classroom control must come first, that the most important thing the child has to learn is how to take instructions. I wanted to be a technical teacher. I was friendly

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and speedy. There was always something to do in my classroom. There was no time for the children to think, only to memorize.

But as more children with learning disabilities entered my class. I began to realize that adherence to technical and theoretical formulations were too often inadequate to get through to them. Then I understood that teaching is not a technique to be learned, it is an art to be developed with patience, warmth and humanity as the essential elements.

The students were receptive to my humanistic approach. but the school administrators were not. As is the Japanese preferred method, I was never confronted directly about my philosophical shift, but instead was made to feel uncomfortable in my position. So I switched over to special education classes, where I had more freedom to try out my own ideas. Many parents supported me, many want an alternative. But in Japan there is no choice.

That's when you decided to leave the public school system?

Yes. I felt that there was no future for me there. To me, the Japanese public school system is like a big tree which is rotting away from within.

So, I've recently planted my own tree, the Planet School, where I am trying for a balance between traditional educational values and what the world now requires: full human beings who are aware of their body, spirit and mind. My school is for those who have found the competition in the public schools too stifling, children who simply can't cope or choose not to. And there seem to

be more and more of them. A recent poll in Tokyo found that over 50% hate going to school .

Many teachers who sympathized with my views were critical of my leaving the public school system. They felt that I should stay, persevere, try to change the system from within. But the growing numbers of dissatisfied students need an alternative now. My school is not primarily academic, but instead serves fundamental individual human needs. If it achieves its aims, others will take notice and begin to change their educational philosophies .

Obedience and good test scores have been the mark of excellence of the student. The highest value has been placed on conforming. But human beings are individual and they are unique. It is only an illusion Japanese society maintains that individual differences are not significant. Japan is now part of a global community. It has to accept peoples of other nationalities, and it also must accept the differences among its own people. In our school we have an international viewpoint, but at the same time we stand firmly on Japanese traditions such as dance and art. This is the kind of alternative I am trying to create. Our schools have thus far inculcated traits which are not only wrong, they are destructive to mankind and to the earth. Education is a process of living, not a preparation for future living.

Before you opened your school, you spent a year observing alternative schools in America. What were your impressions?

I also visited some regular public schools in several states, and I was surprised to find that in some ways they are just like

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Japanese public schools. They make the students line up and walk down the corridors in perfect order. and they give them only 20 minutes to eat lunch. I was impressed by the smaller class sizes, usually 20 to 30 students: in Japan you often have 45 students in a first-grade class. I also noticed that the students are allowed to sit any way they want to in class, slumping in their chairs or resting on their elbows, which is never allowed in Japan, and I thought it was healthy that teachers call their teacher Mr. or Ms. so-and-so, instead of the intimidating term sensen.

But the alternative schools were the most interesting. I went to an alternative schools conference and announced that I was willing to teach Japanese dance and art and t'ai chi and cooking in exchange for room and board. I got 31 invitations to go all over the country, and I accepted all of them! You know, when Japanese people talk to me about this, they always ask, which one was best? But that's the wrong approach, because each one was different. The best thing was the variety. There was one thing they all had in common though, and that was that each one was a real community center. Not only the parents, but the shops and offices and neighbors around the school all seemed very connected to the school, they always knew everything about it.

Of course I already had a strong grounding in traditional Japanese culture. But when I was in America and I saw that many people there are interested in Buddhism and other Japanese traditions, it reinforced my awareness of the specifically Japanese type of wisdom that we all tend to forget that we have. This strengthened my resolve to emphasize Japanese traditions in my school. Whether they realize it or not, every Japanese family has a

store of traditional wisdom and culture that they received from their parents and grandparents and neighbors. Nowadays almost nobody is fully satisfied with the public school system, but most people never stop to think that there is a lot that they can teach at home. Parents should turn off the TV, turn off the family computer, and talk to their kids about their own childhood, and cook with them, and take them to their workplaces. Then they would realize how much they have to teach in the home. And the very best thing that they could do is to travel together as a family, really travel, for much longer than just a few days. Travel is the best education .

Yamashita Keiko was born in Kyoto in 1952. during that interval when the will to westernize was not yet internalized by the Kyoto citizenry. She grew up in her grandmother's house, which mirrored the paradoxical state Japan found itself in. Her grandmother, widowed and without money, turned her spacious home into a boarding house for foreigners attending Kyoto University. Meanwhile, Grandmother urged Keiko to become adept in the traditional arts of Japanese dance, shamisen and koto.

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL CONFERENCE IN JAPAN
by Chris Mercogliano

While on a twelve-day combination tour and peace pilgrimage across Japan, which included visits to both an alternative and a public school, our fearless ΣΚΟΛΕ editor, Mary Leue, (accompanied by her fearless associate, Chris Mercogliano, co-director of Albany's Free School) was the featured guest-speaker at an evening conference on alternative education held in Kyoto on January .

The former Imperial capital, Kyoto is a majestic city filled with ancient temples and monasteries representing the various Buddhist sects, and is the only major Japanese city which was not destroyed by American firebombing during World War II. Kyoto is also home to The Planet School, which is thoroughly enjoying its first year thanks to the inspiration and leadership of Keiko Yamashita. It was Keiko, along with several Planet School co-workers and supporters who hosted and organized the conference.

A large group of 50 - 75 people (a difficult bunch to count with a lot of kids and coming and going) were in attendance, including Kazuhiro Kojima, founder of the Global Human Bridge in Taksago City, Japan, and Dayle Bethel, Director of the Paideia World School in Osaka - two other of Japan's pioneering alternative schools. Mary spoke about the history of the Free School - the hows and whys of starting it back in 1969 - and about how the school gradually developed into a full-fledged community. Many questions from the audience followed, with people wanting to know how the Free School financed itself, how kids fared after leaving,

Photo taken at The Free School, Albany, New York

Chris-san

how the school interacted with the community and vice versa, and whether or not we included kids with handicaps or disabilities.

The session continued for well over three hours, leaving the impression that there is a strong interest in alternative education as well as the definite beginnings of an alternative schools movement bubbling and boiling just under the surface, much like a number of volcanoes throughout Japan. (Asayama, a volcano on the southern island of Kiushu, was active enough to prevent us from visiting a Nipponzan Myohoji Peace Pagoda located there.)

Quoting a recent poll, Keiko Yamashita says that over fifty percent of the children in Tokyo hate going to school. Competition and pressures to succeed in Japanese schools are overwhelming and apparently are still on the increase, with no sign of letting up, while at the same time the government remains staunchly anti-alternative education. As a result, Japanese people continue to look to the American alternative education movement for guidance and support. The people in Kyoto were deeply grateful to Mary and me for appearing at their conference, and it was certainly a great honor and a pleasure for us to have an opportunity to contribute something to their efforts to create change in Japanese education.

Chris Mercogliano, well-known to Coalition members, has been a teacher - now co-director, with his wife Betsy - at The Free School since 1973. In addition to his school duties, he is also deeply involved in ecological activism and has been to India twice, in addition to the trip to Japan. We eagerly await additional articles on his discoveries.

EARTHWATCH:

HOUSEHOLD SOURCES OF GREENHOUSE GASES

Each year the United States increases the carbon dioxide (CO_2) content of the atmosphere by almost five trillion pounds, mostly as a result of using fossil fuels for energy. Emissions of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), methane and other gases have a heat-trapping effect equivalent to another four trillion pounds of CO_2. Although the United States has less than one-twentieth of the world's population, it is responsible for more than one-sixth of greenhouse-gas emissions.

UCS's (Union of Concerned Scientists) 1990 Week of Education, "The Billion Pound Diet," will draw attention to the environ-mental and economic implications of such high greenhouse-gas emissions and use of fossil fuel. Through programs on college campuses and in communities nationwide during the week of October 22-28, participants will learn about—and then take—actions that will collectively result in the elimination of one billion pounds of emissions over the course of a year. The diagram below (repeated in the text below) shows some of the ways in which individuals are responsible for CO_2 and other greenhouse-gas emissions. The Week of Education will encourage individuals to change their personal behavior and also work to reform government energy policy.

Sources: World Resources Institute, *World Resources 1990-91;*
National Audubon Society; *CO_2 - Diet for a Greenhouse Planet* (1990)

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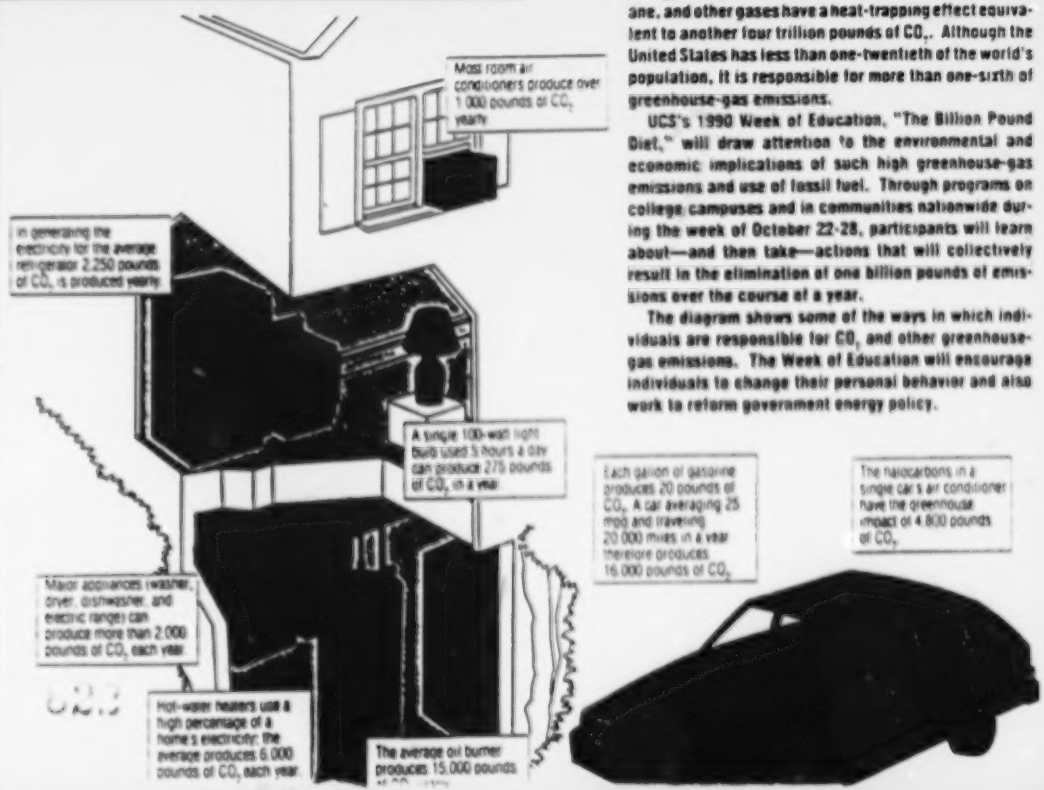
HOUSEHOLD SOURCES OF GREENHOUSE GASES


Most room air conditioners produce over 1,000 pounds of CO_2 yearly.
In generating the electricity for the average refrigerator 2,250 pounds of CO_2 is produced yearly.
A single 100-watt light bulb used 5 hours a day can produce 275 pounds of CO_2 in a year.
Each gallon of gasoline produces 20 pounds of CO_2. A car averaging 25 mpg and traveling 20,000 miles in a year therefore produces 16,000 pounds of CO_2.
The halocarbons in a single car's air conditioner have the greenhouse impact of 4,800 pounds of CO_2.
Major appliances (washer, dryer, dishwasher, and electric range) can produce more than 2,000 pounds of CO_2 each year.
Hot-water heaters use a high percentage of a home's electricity; the average produces 6,000 pounds of CO_2 each year.
The average oil burner produces 15,000 pounds

Sources: World Resources Institute, World Resources 1990-91; National Audubon Society, CO_2: Diet for a Greenhouse Planet (1990); Massachusetts Audubon Society and New England Electric System, *Energy Efficient Home Appliances Tips Booklet*.

Each year the United States increases the carbon dioxide (CO_2) content of the atmosphere by almost five trillion pounds, mostly as a result of using fossil fuels for energy. Emissions of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), methane, and other gases have a heat-trapping effect equivalent to another four trillion pounds of CO_2. Although the United States has less than one-twentieth of the world's population, it is responsible for more than one-sixth of greenhouse-gas emissions.

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The average oil burner produces 15,000 pounds of CO_2 yearly.

WAS EARTH DAY A SUCCESS?

For the 3,000 people on the town common in Amherst, MA, Earth Day was both invigorating and uplifting. The unexpected summerlike weather and the festive atmosphere with music, games and dozens of display booths made it feel like the dawn of a new era. No environmental problem seemed so large that it could not ultimately be solved by the combined efforts of a newly mobilized populace.

But did this, and similar scenes played out in thousands of towns and cities across the nation, mean that Earth Day was

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successful? Does it suggest that our society has entered a more environmentally conscious era?

In the short run, Earth Day accomplished as much as any one-day event could have. It heightened millions of people's awareness of environmental issues. Visible displays of support from a wide range of community groups, businesses, and political leaders raised the environment to the status of a major, mainstream issue. The focus on individual action, with various lists of 20 or 50 or 500 things people could do, provided a way for those with newly raised consciousnesses to take action.

Nevertheless, it is too early to tell whether Earth Day will be a long-term success. That will depend on what the people and the government do one, two, five and ten years from now. Environmental problems are so serious that only a fundamental shift in policy and in people's behavior can hope to address them. But it is unclear whether Earth Day will lead to such a shift or whether the environment will again depart center stage to be replaced by other problems.

UCS and other organizations have an opportunity and a responsibility to build on the momentum of Earth Day. To do this, they must direct and focus citizen energy and efforts. Earth Day was necessarily a diffuse, decentralized event in which dozens of issues were raised and hundreds of solutions and actions proposed. People now need help in identifying which are the most important issues to tackle and which of the many possible individual actions will have the greatest impact. Moreover, since individuals' actions alone cannot solve the most pressing environmental problems,

people need to move into the political arena to shape state and nationwide policy.

UCS will be arguing that as the nation and the environmental community set priorities, they should give first place to energy use and energy policy. A changed energy policy, and especially reduced use of fossil fuels, will address a wide range of problems including acid rain, air pollution and oil spills. Energy policy is also the key to attacking global warming, potentially the greatest environmental threat we face. Moreover, energy policy is one area in which environmental and economic goals need not conflict, since reduced reliance on fossil fuels could reduce the balance-of-trade deficit and improve U.S. competitiveness.

We have designed this fall's Week of Education to highlight the importance of energy policy and to build in a conscious way on Earth Day. During the program, entitled "The Billion Pound Diet," organizers across the country will sponsor debates, lectures, film series, and other educational events on the relationship between energy and the government. We will encourage program organizers to give special attention to the role of government energy policy.

We will also use the Week to encourage participants to take concrete actions leading toward the elimination of one billion pounds of carbon dioxide ($C0_2$) emissions. It is easy for people to listen to speakers and agree in principle that a change in energy use is necessary. But without a specific challenge or task, an audience may not translate this philosophical agreement into action. Our billion-pound goal will help people move from intellectual support of the environment to specific, concrete actions. By focusing on $C0_2$ emissions, which reflect fossil fuel use, we will give

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individuals a clear standard by which to judge the impact of different individual actions.

By eliminating at least a billion pounds of CO_2 emissions, we will show that Earth Day was not a temporary aberration and that support for environmental improvement continues to build.

-Warren Leon

Warren Leon is director of public education for UCS. This article is reprinted from *Nucleus*, a quarterly report from the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS).

PEACETREES!

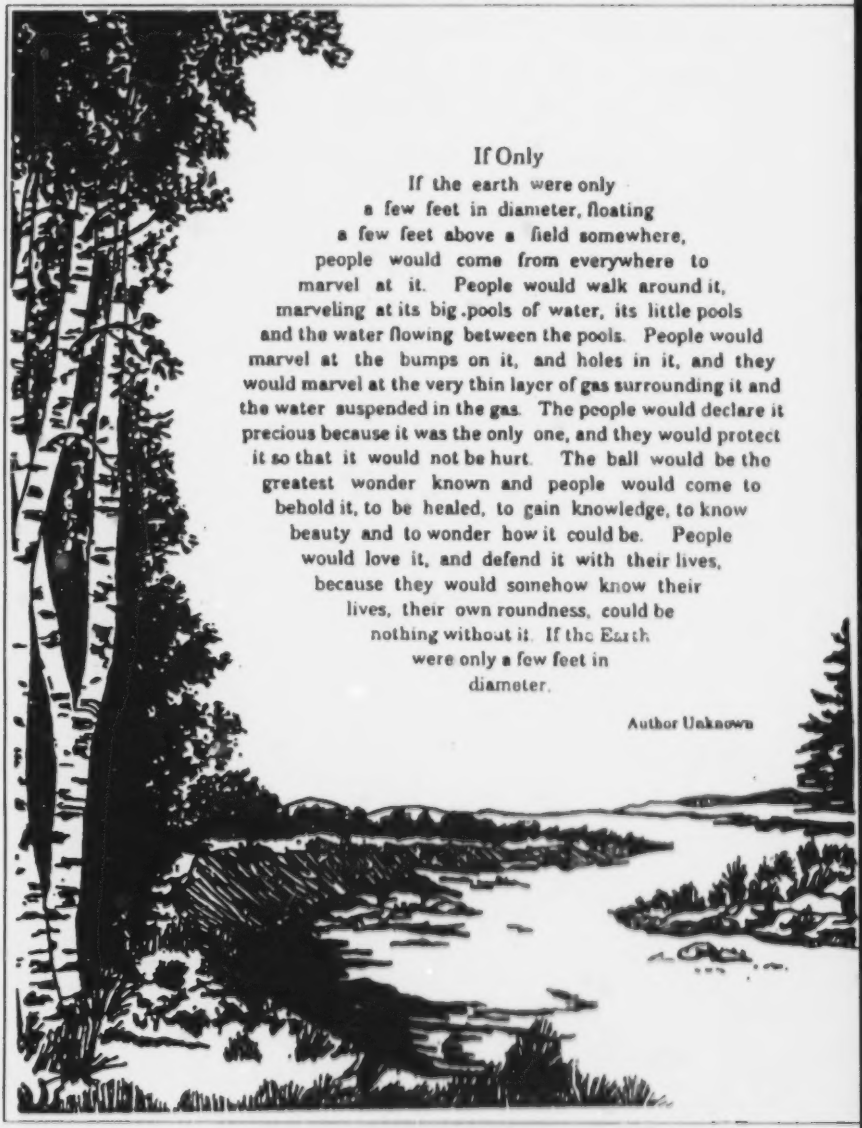
Earthstewards Network, Holyearth Foundation
P.O. Box 10697, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110
Co-creating a more peaceful, caring world through global communication, conflict resolution and citizen diplomacy.

NEW YORK CITY PEACETREES
JULY 7-25, 1991 IN BEDFORD-STUYVESANT, BROOKLYN, NY

The EARTHSTEWARDS NETWORK's ongoing international PeaceTree program is being hosted in New York this summer by MAGNOLIA TREE EARTH CENTER of Bedford-Stuyvesant. Working together with the special support of the East Fulton Development Group and with the cooperation of the NYC Department of Transportation and the NYC Housing Authority, we are busy preparing for this New York Urban PeaceTree project.

This exciting program will bring youth from around the world to participate with youth from the Bedford-Stuyvesant community in an environmental improvement project. Our purpose is to promote inter-cultural harmony, to build awareness of environmental problems and solutions, and to empower young men and women with the skills and confidence to help create a better world. In our PeaceTrees projects in India and Costa Rica, we found that the simple act of planting trees together is a transformational act. It can work its magic here in New York as it has in India, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Washington D.C., and Los Angeles. These young people are carrying the message back to their communities that it is possible to be friends and to work together for a better world.

We begin in the community by building bridges in the community. A team of twenty-five youths, primarily from Bedford-Stuyvesant, will be brought together at Magnolia Tree Earth Center this spring to begin working together in preparation to act as hosts and leaders for the summer PeaceTrees project. On July 7 twenty-five young people from around the world -- young people from the



If Only

If the earth were only
a few feet in diameter, floating
a few feet above a field somewhere,
people would come from everywhere to
marvel at it. People would walk around it,
marveling at its big pools of water, its little pools
and the water flowing between the pools. People would
marvel at the bumps on it, and holes in it, and they
would marvel at the very thin layer of gas surrounding it and
the water suspended in the gas. The people would declare it
precious because it was the only one, and they would protect
it so that it would not be hurt. The ball would be the
greatest wonder known and people would come to
behold it, to be healed, to gain knowledge, to know
beauty and to wonder how it could be. People
would love it, and defend it with their lives,
because they would somehow know their
lives, their own roundness, could be
nothing without it. If the Earth
were only a few feet in
diameter.

Author Unknown

Soviet Union, India, Belfast, Ireland, Costa Rica, Bluefields Nicaragua, Washington D.C. and Los Angeles--will fly to New York to join the local team. We will all live together in a dormitory at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. Magnolia Tree Earth Center will be the home base for coordinating our activities in the community.

The activities of our first week together will focus on creating the bonds of trust and understanding that will help make us a truly global team. We will share, learn from each other, celebrate our differences, and find our common fears and hopes. Training during the week will include team building, cross-cultural learning and communications, leadership/conflict resolution, and urban forestry.

Our first project will be to plant a grove of trees within the community garden at Magnolia Tree. In an undeveloped section, we will clean up the rubble and debris, liberating the soil and freeing Mother Earth to flourish. We will bring in material to landscape and feed the earth--planting trees, ground covers, and flowers.

Our second project site is on Fulton St. between Sumpter and Ralph Ave. Our plan is to create a PEACE PLAZA and a GREEN WAY on Fulton St. Our work here will include planting cherry trees as a symbol of peace, burying a time capsule ond creating a meditation space in one of the triangles. The Department of Transportation will be repaving the streets. This is truly an exciting community-based project, and we're proud to be a part of it.

But it won't be all hard work! We plan some free time and to provide entertainment of our own with song and dance from our various cultures. One weekend will find us on a camping trip and another celebrating at a block party with the community.

Our final week will find us reflecting with the friends we have made, celebrating the work we have done, and planning our next step with the skills and awareness we have nurtured over these weeks together.

New York City PeaceTrees is a 100% volunteer effort. To find out more about how you or your organization can be involved--as a volunteer, in promoting this event, donating goods and services, or sponsoring trees and airfares for our international team--please contact us.

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PROFILED SCHOOLS:

AN EXPERIENCE IN FROEBEL'S GARDEN
by Elizabeth S. Cole

Now the garden-beds are blooming,
Water-pot in hand, we're coming,
All the thirsty plants to sprinkle,
All the buds begin to twinkle.
Scatter now their perfume rare,
They open their petals one by one,
They roll out their cups to the glowing sun,
Rewarding all our tender care.

From Mother-Play and Nursery Songs
by Friedrich Froebel (1878)

According to Froebelian philosophy, a "thirsty plant" is a metaphor for the natural curiosity of the young child. Friedrich Froebel (1887), the German educational reformer who founded the concept of kindergarten (literally translated as child's garden), believed that children should be aroused to activity by having their interest awakened, cultivated, unfolded and ripened. To emphasize this aspect, the garden was an important environmental component of Froebel's classroom design. In the garden, Froebel felt, children were brought under the influences and impressions of natural learning.

During a recent sabbatical, I had the good fortune of observing in a contemporary setting the tenets of learning expressed long ago by Froebel. Although my area of expertise is early childhood art education, I was immediately impressed with the application possibilities that Froebelian principles offered to the art educator. These ideas came to light while conducting research in an inner-London school.

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Hidden among row houses in various stages of repair in London's crowded west end is a multilevel nursery and primary school built in the early 1900s. Addison Gardens is a neighborhood school serving a diverse ethnic population. Recent immigrants residing in makeshift hotels, subsidized families, unemployed and blue collar workers comprise the socioeconomic makeup of this community. The lack of vegetation and natural beauty surrounding the school reflects the bleak atmosphere the children face once they leave the confines of their classroom.

Behind the school complex, on the first floor of the building, the austere conditions of the outside world are quickly transposed as one enters the stimulating classroom of Jo Smith, the nursery school teacher. Jo, who is in her second year of teaching, received her training from the Froebel Institute College. Upon my arrival, she remarked, "I want the children to feel as if they are invited in to create." Directly outside her classroom is a playground that she has filled with manipulative materials for play. Tucked in a corner of the outdoor playspace is the link between Friedrich Froebel and Jo Smith. There a small garden plot, which contains the remnants of the children's sunflower crop, is a testimony to the long lasting effects Froebel has had on early education.

Froebel and the Evolution of the British Nursery School

After a failed Prussian revolution in 1848, German liberals immigrated to England. Among those who settled in the Bloomsbury area of London was a group of female teachers with extensive Froebel training. They immediately set up kindergartens that adhered strictly to the methods and ideals of Froebel's

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philosophy. The success of these kindergartens won the financial support of influential businessmen, and the imported kindergarten programs found fertile ground in the upper-middle classes of London. By 1884, the Froebel Educational Institute was founded to promote and train teachers in the educational ideas of Friedrich Froebel.

Childhood Education

In the late 1800s, the London School Board formed a committee to assess the feasibility of extending public education to children below the age of 5. The success of the German kindergartens, although private in nature, had convinced the government that early education could benefit all young children. The committee published an extensive report of findings (London School Board, 1908), which suggested that the term "nursery school" be adopted as the official label for education of 3- and 4-yearolds . Regarding teacher credentials, the report stated:

> Probably the best person to have the management of the Nursery School will be a well-educated teacher who has been trained on Froebelian principles in the widest sense of the word. Her preparation would, therefore, include a careful study of the physical and mental development of childhood; a thorough course of Nature Study, and some study of literature and history for children in poetry and story. (p. 20)

While the endorsement of the government committee verified the soundness of Froebelian doctrine, in actual implementation the precepts were modified. The extensive teacher training required, distinct conditions such as small classes and special materials were all financially impractical for a nationwide government-funded

school system. As a result, some alterations were made but the basic premises of Froebel's ideas remained at the center of the nursery school operation. Of special consideration for this article was the committee's recommendation that children should "have easy access to playgrounds which should contain trees and small garden plots" (London School Board, 1908, p. 20). To this day the garden remains an integral part of British school environs.

The Children's Garden

With this background of Froebel's influence on British Nursery Schools, it is time to turn attention back to the classroom in Addison Gardens. On this particular day, the children were fascinated with a sunflower Jo had brought in from their garden. She explained to me that the children had planted the seeds at the close of their summer term in July. When they returned in September, their garden was filled with bright yellow flowers reaching far above their heads.

The process of planting and cultivating these magnificent flowers was not meant to be an isolated experience for the children. Learning, according to Froebel (1887), is not compartmentalized. Everything relates and connects. Bruce (1987) explains that in Froebel's notion of a learning sequence, there is not a smooth progression but slight changes in the familiar, since learning involves challenges to what is already known (p. 15). Allowing the child to assemble, connect and assimilate a concept requires the teacher to know when to interact and when to withdraw from the discovery process. Despite her limited teaching career, Jo intuitively

knew how and when to intervene sensitively in the children's learning.

Initially, the planting of the sunflower seeds allowed the children to take ownership in the growth process of the plants. Goldammer (1882) noted that Froebel felt that children, by natural instinct, need to dig in the earth. After all, he states, the instinct of agriculture was one of the first civilizing tendencies to occur in the human race. The hands-on experience is, in Froebelian thought, a sensitizing method for the acquisition of knowledge. The child links concepts with real things. The wholeness of the garden experience brings the child directly under the influences of nature. Only that with which the child occupies himself, that which he himself holds and handles, can maintain a lasting hold on his attention (Froebel, 1887).

The first visual documentation of the sunflower's successful growth was made by the children shortly after they returned for the fall term. Jo encouraged the children to observe the shapes, textures and colors of the plant. They measured how tall the plant had grown. They counted the petals. They discussed how they might achieve mixing colors of paint to match the variation of hues within the flower, stem and leaves. They suggested ways to represent the parts of the flower with different painting tools. Beginning with the whole, Jo interacted with the children to help them form a network of information across different areas of knowledge. The accumulated effect of the experience was witnessed in the beautifully painted, nearly lifesize sunflowers displayed in the classroom.

On the day of my visit, Jo brought out one of the sunflowers that the children had previously painted. The sunflower, which was

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Photo taken at The Free School, Albany, New York

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at the end of its blooming period, had suffered the ravages of nature during a week of rain and wind. The children were curious about the new form. They handled it, used a magnifying glass to look for subtleties and discussed the variety of changes that had taken place in their flower. Once again the children were encouraged to gather sensory information through self-discovery. Jo merely stepped into the group, offered them the visual stimulus, then moved to the background while the children examined and discussed their findings.

Harrison (1905), who was an advocate of Froebelian teaching, explains how critical sensory awareness is to the child's thought process:

> Half the wealth in the world is lost to most of us from lack of power to perceive. The difference between so-called clever children and intelligent ones is largely a difference in the sense perception. (p. 23)

Later on in the day, the sunflower was placed in the drawing center. A number of stimulating activity centers in the classroom allowed the children to select materials to explore and manipulate. Jo believes that the materials need to be presented in an inviting way. The drawing table contained a variety of papers and drawing implements. Bits and pieces of colored surfaces, pots of crayons, pastels and baskets of markers provided a rich selection of materials. The center was adjacent to the collage and paint area, and the children were comfortable moving between the centers to embellish their work. The idea of linking was not only evident in their thinking, it was also a part of their creative process.

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Several children selected the drawing table as their focus of activity. Young Laura became fascinated with removing the dried seeds from the flower. Noticing her discovery, Jo pointed out to Laura the variation of colors in the seeds and how they neatly fit back into their own little pockets in the pod. With this inspiration, Laura set out on a drawing venture that continued throughout the afternoon. Her discovery became a sustaining force as she created her visual perception of the sunflower.

Laura began her drawing using pastels and markers. Remembering her previous rendering of the flower, she moved to the paint center and added a few touches of color. Jo then suggested to Laura that little bits of color could be added to the work at the collage table. Laura's obvious delight with the work intensified as she began assembling materials on top of her work. Encouraging the children to extend their efforts is something Jo does constantly in the classroom. "I like them to go beyond the obvious solution, to solve the problem in a different way," she said. In Laura's case, Jo had been very successful. Laura not only added bits of paper; she embellished her creation by layering netting, fringing the edge of the paper and collaging a small box to the surface in which she continued her flower representation. Each newly added surface became a challenge for Laura.

Finally Laura brought her sunflower activity to an end. "Do you like it, Jo?" she queried. "Yes I do, do you?" Jo responded. At that point, a group of children gathered around Jo and Laura to assess the work of art. They talked about the design, Laura's inventive use of materials, and how patterns and arrangements worked. By the well measured level of the children's response, it

was obvious that Jo regularly engages in this critical process. Allowing the children to assess and comment on Laura's artistic endeavor added another dimension to Jo's efforts to sensitize the children to become aesthetically aware of the beauty around them, whether it be in the form of a sunflower or in a child's arrangement of shapes and colors.

Late in the school day, Froebel's philosophy of learning became a true-life event. John, who is above average in size, had become a behavioral problem in the classroom. Parental pressures have placed demands on his learning that are not within the realm of his capabilities. Consequently, he is frustrated with school and remains attentive for very short periods of time. This day, however, his curiosity had been piqued by examination of the sunflower. During the course of the day, he periodically handled the flower. Suddenly, in a burst of excitement, he came running over to Jo to announce his discovery. He realized the seeds in the pod were just like the ones they had planted in July. "If you plant these," he exclaimed, "we'd have new flowers!" The whole cycle of growth was now established by this young child after experiencing and fitting together the parts. The unity of the learning process was complete.

Application of Froebelian Principles to Art Education

The current focus in art education methodology has been on a substantive approach called discipline-based art education, advocated by the Getty Center for Education in the Arts (Duke, 1983). The basic premise of this method is that art should be approached as a subject of study with a sequential curriculum that

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integrates instruction in art history, studio art, aesthetics and art criticism (Greer,1984). The merits of this strategy are many, but it is only one strategy for creating in depth instruction in the arts. Gardner, as cited by Bruce (1987), points out the dangers of holding to one overarching stance. Such rigidity, he comments, tends to narrow the approach to problems, rather than opening up the exploration of them (Bruce, 1987, p. 5).

Gardner's words ring true when recalling the excitement of learning generated by the children's planting, examination and artistic rendering of the sunflower. We, as art educators, need to be reminded that effective teaching methods are never outdated. Principles of the past can still be successfully employed as viable methods for creative teaching.

While Froebel was primarily concerned with early childhood education, his principles for maximizing learning can readily be applied to the field of art education. These points should be considered:

• Encourage learning connections between art experiences rather than offering isolated lessons. By doing so, knowledge that is absorbed through this interactive process can be transformed and stored in the imagination of the children.

• Provide self-directed, self-discovery activities. The media and objects the children encounter during these activities will help them explore new ways of using these materials.

• Intervene sensitively when appropriate, so that the child's art experience is not dominated by the teacher and the child is not left helpless in the art process.

• Provide a stimulating environment that offers children opportunities to extend their learning experiences.

• Offer children opportunities to express their feelings and opinions about forms of beauty. These "first feeling encounters" promote articulation of the children's visual perceptions, as well as aesthetic awareness of the world around them.

Finally, Froebel's principles are not an easy recipe for successful art instruction. Past traditions and present trends all offer ways to stimulate and motivate children in the creative process. The variety of teaching options we as art educators have should not, to paraphrase Froebel, be compartmentalized. As new teaching strategies surface, the art instructor needs to be alert to possibilities for linking strategies successfully with past curriculum trends. There is, after all, more than one way to plant and cultivate an idea!

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Teacher Buck O'Herin watches as students Cincy Hammond and Coley Parker and school codirector Emmanuel Pariser prepare a soup in the kitchen of the Community School, an alternative school in Camden, Maine.

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PROFILED SCHOOLS:
The Community School, Camden, Maine

THE BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE • SEPTEMBER 16, 1990
Maine alternative school gives dropouts a way back.
by Tom Verde

SPECIAL TO THE GLOBE

CAMDEN, Maine - It was almost dinner hour at the Community School, a rambling old house in the residential section of this historic coastal town.

Ben Waggy, 16-year-old student and former high-school dropout, was in the school's music room - actually a second-floor bedroom with a couple of tired-looking couches and a beat-up stereo. Until he graduated on Friday, Waggy liked to relax there at the end of the day and listen to some Beatles, maybe a little Jimi Hendrix.

On this particular day recently, he felt he deserved it: he had had a long hard day of work and hadn't even cracked a book yet.

Here at the Community School, things are done a little differently. "Classes aren't really that intense," he said. "They're probably the least focused-on part of the program."

The Community School is the oldest alternative high school in Maine and the only one of its kind in the state, according to its directors. The focus is far more on helping students develop life skills and independence than on traditional academic pursuits. The students are male and female, 16 to 20 years old and from a variety of backgrounds: the farmlands of Aroostook County, the Passamaquoddy Indian Township, the streets of Portland. Many

have had trouble with drugs or alcohol, with the law or with just finding a way to fit in.

Dropout rate high

They are not alone. Twenty-two percent of high school students in America drop out in their first year, a figure that just recently started leveling off after a steady climb.

For the most part, students at the Community School want the one thing that, for one reason or another, has eluded them: a high-school diploma.

"I was going to be 17 years old in the eighth grade the way I was headed," said student Coley Barker. "I didn't like that at all."

Waggy similarly found himself facing six years of high school to get his diploma, a perspective that he said "didn't look very great."

Instead, Waggy, Barker and others at the Community School hope to earn their diplomas in the six months it takes to get through the residential program here. It is an unusual program.

Learning through Jobs

One primary tenet of the school, according to Emanuel Pariser, the school's cofounder and codirector, is that one of the ways students learn independence is by holding down a job.

"We give credit for work experience because that's part of the program here," he said. "Students know that working is their ticket to some kind of independence and to the things they want."

Students pay $50 a week for their room and board out of money earned at their jobs. If they fall too far behind in their rent, they are expelled. They are responsible for getting themselves to

work on time every morning, fixing their own meals, doing their own laundry, keeping the house in order.

The importance of personal maintenance is second only to personal choice. Students must want to come here. They cannot be ordered here by a guidance counselor, judge or probation officer. After an initial interview, it is the student who must call back to say whether the Community School feels right.

Discipline through group

Once here, students even discipline themselves. They hold group rap sessions with faculty and staff every Thursday night to air differences, make suggestions and vote on what are called "consequences" for infringements. Consequences include extra household duties or writing out how it feels to have done something wrong.

Classes in regular high-school subjects such as English or science, as well as less conventional topics such as conflict resolution or parenting, are conducted on a one-to-one tutorial basis.

They take place at night in the school's dining room after the dishes have been cleared from the table and have been replaced by piles of paper and books. There isn't a chalkboard anywhere in sight, which is just fine with Buck O'Herin, one of the school's five teachers.

"We try not to focus so much on the facts, which people tend to forget anyway, such as what year did Washington cross the Delaware, and more on understanding implied meanings and analytical skills," he said. "We want to teach people how to think."

Pariser and codirector Dora Lievow, both certified teachers, founded the Community School in 1973. It was a struggle at first. The Maine Department of Education took over a year to recognize the school's legitimacy. And citizens of this picture-perfect town needed time to accept the thought of a school for troubled kids sitting cheek-by-jowl beside their village greens and yacht clubs.

"Let's face it, it was suspect," recalled Jane Day, a board member of the Community School and former editor of the Camden Herald. "People were asking themselves, 'What are we going to have here? These kids are dropouts, they're going to cause trouble in the community.' All kinds of things were discussed before anybody even heard the first word about what the program was."

Part of daily life

But soon Community School students were a part of daily life, doing community-service work, which is part of their curriculum, and holding jobs in local businesses.

"These kids aren't afraid to get their hands dirty," said Terrance Fitzpatrick, owner of Fitzpatrick's Deli/Cafe, where Community School students have held jobs as dishwashers and prep cooks since 1982.

Fitzpatrick has noted a difference between the Community School workers and local teen-agers who have worked for him. "These kids have to work to be able to pay their bills," he said. "They're more reliable."

In addition to paying part of their own way, students must pass competency tests in several subjects in order to graduate and satisfy

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Maine Department of Education requirements. But there are also less tangible tests.

When a student comes home from work, for example, he or she may be on cooking duty, which means planning and preparing a nutritious and edible meal. As with most experiences at the school, success counts for credit toward graduation.

"This is what you might call applied home economics," said Pariser. "They're not reading about it in a book, they're doing it, and we're the judges because we have to eat it."

Other hands-on credit at the school comes from hiking trips to the nearby Camden Hills as physical education, and nature walks in the woods for science credit.

Such a practical education is not cheap. Tuition is about $2,600 a month. Much of that is supplied by the Maine Office of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Prevention and the Maine Department of Corrections as a preventive program. Parents contribute on a sliding scale based on ability to pay, and the rest is made up by donations, very often of used school or office equipment.

Enrollment is limited to eight, but sometimes the number diminishes by the end of semester. Last term, which ended last week, there were only three students left out of the seven who began in April.

The Community School is in many ways much more demanding than a regular high school. There are lots of rules.

Called the "inalterable rules" nicknamed the "intolerable rules" by students - they include some predictable ones such as no drugs, no weapons, no sexual relations between students. There are also other lines that cannot be crossed: no threats of violence, no name-

calling or put-downs. Breaking those rules can constitute a strike. Three strikes and you're out. But even expulsion is not necessarily looked upon as failure.

"We don't regard completing the term as the only way to succeed here," said Lievow. "There's a real strong feeling that you learn every day that you're here. If someone is unable to complete the term, we work hard to make sure that it is their choice and that it is something that can be learned from and built on."

Ed Foster is one Community School graduate who has built on his experience at the school. He graduated *summa cum laude* last spring from the University of Southern Maine and was the senior commencement speaker. He received a full scholarship to Tufts University, where he will study modern European history. He plans to be a teacher. He has come away from his experience as a dropout in Maine and as a student at the Community School with strong feelings about what should be done for students who drop out.

"It's important that we find alternatives for those students," he said, "not because they deserve something extra, but because we have to look at them as individuals. I think it's time we realize that standardized institutions aren't going to be the answer for everybody and that people are of value regardless of whether they make it through that system."

Note: as we went to press, we received word from the Community School that their funding from the State of Maine is in serious jeopardy, because of governmental budgetary cuts. We hope this turns out to be untrue! Good luck, Community School! Here follows another article from Emanuel Pariser based on his experience with his school:

ELEMENTS OF A SUPPORTIVE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT
by Emanuel Pariser

As teachers, we need to be attended to and supported in much the same way that we attend to our **students**. Systems looking for caretakers often do not know how to take care of them once they've hired them. Systems who want to have their students learn the value of choice, often don't offer many choices to their teachers.

1. **Autonomy and Choice Hiring**: Who decides who gets hired? How much input do you have in this?

To be effective, alternative programs need to be intimately involved in the hiring of new faculty members.

At the Community School we use group interviews to interview prospective staff. ALL STAFF are involved in this process.

Student Admissions: Who's in charge of who gets accepted? Alternative programs must be able to pick the students they feel they will work best with. If staff do not have that control they will feel hopeless and powerless.

At the Community School final decisions on acceptance involve ALL STAFF. Initial interviews are done by one staff, reviewed by two, and finally brought to a full staff meeting.

2. **Workplace decision making responsibility and authority**: How do decisions get made in your program? Who has responsibility for what?

By nature the most effective alternative programs and schools are relatively small. The necessity to specialize must always

be subservient to the necessity of building a sense of community via a shared decision making process. If all faculty do not feel empowered, they will not last long, nor feel committed to the work.

At the Community School a full staff meeting is held once a week for five hours. All programmatic decisions are taken at this meeting.

3. **Consultancy and process**: How do decisions about individually challenging students get made in your program? The students who find the grey area in every rule; who seem to have great potential but are magnificent at not living up to it? How do staff conflicts, gripes, intra-faculty issues get addressed?

Alternative schools often work with students who have long histories of having been failed by their environments. They also often have "redeeming" social qualities which have allowed them to survive and adapt to whatever environment they find themselves in, so we get hooked. Along with bringing up the issue of powerlessness for us as staff when we find we cannot be immediately "helpful", working with these students may trigger our own unresolved, or painfully resolved issues; as a staff we may find ourselves unconsciously recreating these students' families' behavioral patterns. Even when we are successful there is an emotional price to pay sometimes, if unaddressed, this debt begins to fray staff relationships.

At the Community School, a consultant, with experience in family systems, and groups, works with the staff every week and facilitates our full school meeting on Thursday nights. As an "outsider" to the system, the consultant can "see" more clearly what is going on - especially between staff. This person is also less

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invested in individual students, and more concerned with the maintenance of the whole community.

Along with being a more "objective" observer, the consultant is there to make the staff process feel "safe" enough, for people to address thorny personal issues which have come up between staff, or have been triggered through staff-student interactions. For example: a student has been accepted who has an active eating disorder; a staff member has suffered from an eating disorder for many years, and is just now feeling successfully free of it. How will this staffer manage to keep this issue from interfering in his work with the student; where can he talk about the effect this situation is having on him? The consultant can lead this discussion and monitor the staff's adjustment to the situation.

Along with bringing an outside perspective, the consultant can also enliven discussions with relevant professional material relating to education, psychology, poetry - etc. which apply to a particular situation and in this way can help faculty bridge the gap between theory and practice.

4. **Supervision**: Who supervises your work? What form does this supervision take? Does the process feel regulatory or enhancing? Is it a process which attempts to fit your work into a certain pre-ordained mold, or which attempts to enhance and deepen your teaching?

Supervision in alternative settings should mirror the values the program holds with regards to its students. Strengths should be capitalized on; problems should be addressed directly and with the best interests of the student always kept in mind. The process should be fit to the individual; the teacher should constantly have the

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opportunity to be making decisions within the context of a larger decision making body, i.e. committee, department, etc.

At the Community School supervision takes place in three ways: first, the weekly staff meeting provides a forum in which faculty can and do discuss each other's work as well as their own. People's frustrations with their own and other's work are aired. second, every new staff is assigned a "mom" (a non-gender based role) who meets regularly with that staffer for approximately a year, until their feet and everything else has gotten suitably wet; third, staff evaluate each other's work formally, four times a year. The forms for these evaluations change depending on the inventiveness of the group which is organizing them. They tend to be a set of questions, which are responded to by each staff member in writing and shared in dyads; larger group issues, or unresolved conflicts are brought back to the group to work out.

5. **Developing "collegiality"** - a sense of intimacy and community among staff: What opportunities are there in your program for faculty to get to know each other? What activities have you done together which increase your effectiveness and enjoyment in working together?

No alternative program can last long without the sense among staff that they are involved together in a common endeavor. This sense of community arises out of the work and the chance to be with one another in non-task oriented situations.

At the Community School a staff-lunch proceeds each staff meeting. It is prepared by one faculty member on a rotating basis. On a regular basis staff get together to do something "fun", i.e. take a hike, watch a movie, etc. Once or twice a year, the entire staff and

consultant has a "day of visioning" which is a retreat expressly designed to enhance group process and define mutually held goals for the upcoming six months. Finally each staff meeting begins with a "check-in" process that allows faculty to talk about what is going on in their lives especially as it relates to their mood at the moment.

How To Make Your Alternative Program Unsupportive: Design It to Answer No to These Questions by Emanuel Pariser

Studies have shown that job dissatisfaction has more to do with negative working conditions and a perceived inability to affect change, than salary levels.

1. Does your program include any other staff besides yourself?
2. Do you have autonomy in choosing the students you will be serving?
3. Is it understood by the administration that "quick" results are unlikely?
4. Do you have a process for addressing inter-staff issues?
5. Is your faculty readily able to deal with serious differences among themselves?
6. Do you have a process for providing recognition to Staff?
7. Is there a method of looking at how the "work" is bringing up critical personal issues for you, which may at times affect your effectiveness?
8. Do you feel you are working mostly as part of a team?
9. If you have supervision, has your supervisor ever been in your position?
10. Can you act quickly on your insights about your students (i.e.with regard to academics or life-areas)?
11. Do other teachers at your school know what you are doing?Do they support it?
12. Do you have frequent contact with your administrator? Does s/he understand the nature of your program?
13. Do you regularly have contact with other fellow faculty outside of work - "fun"????
14. Have you ever had a retreat just for the teachers in your alternative program????
15. Is your curriculum one which allows a maximum of personal input on the teacher's and student's part?
16. Do you ever have time to get together with educators in your field and brainstorm, problem solve, weep, etc.
17. Do you ever have the feeling that you are "all in the same boat" with your fellow faculty, i.e. that you share a common cause and concern and that you're working together on it?

GIST OF EXTEMPORANEOUS REMARKS AT THE THIRD ANNUAL REUNION OF THE FRIENDS OF THE MODERN SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

by Jo Ann Wheeler Burbank

It may be of interest to know how I came to the Modern School. I began to teach a one-room rural school when I was still only seventeen --with the connivance of a desperate District Superintendent badly in need of teachers. It was the typical "little red schoolhouse"--actually it was a dingy gray; it housed some 24 pupils ranging in age from four to thirteen years, and from pre-school to first year high school. We now call this set-up an open school, and this it was--outwardly.

Unfortunately, it was governed by a very strict Course of Study devised in Albany to cover all grades. For example, a child of ten years was supposed to be in the third grade and in that grade he was supposed to complete a detailed line of study. Otherwise he wouldn't "pass".... and questions were apt to be asked...from parent...from the authorities. In other words, the child was to be fitted into a mold, regardless of individual differences, rate of growth and aptitudes.

Fortunately, we were not too rigidly super-vised, so for a while I was more or less able to gauge the school to the individual needs of the children. It was soon very necessary to learn each child's potential, to allow him the latitude he needed to forge ahead at his own pace, or to work out his difficulties...(and there were many in that truly rural community)...Coming from a family in which not only "book learning" but creative activity and self initiative were the rule, it was natural that sooner or later I would try

to introduce creative activities, to try to stimulate a child to think for himself. For about four years I managed to keep such a regime going by walking a tight rope...trying to compromise between the authoritarian regime imposed by the state and the idea of growth from within outward, which my own background had taught me was the best way for children to grow. Then I gave up.

My parents were at that time living in Reading, Pa. and my mother, whose ideas on education were very advanced, became friendly with Kate Edelman who was also living there. When Kate heard of my experience, and of Mother's theories of child development, she exclaimed, "Why, you ought to know about the Ferms!" And this is how I first heard of Elisabeth and Alexis Ferm.

It isn't necessary here to detail how I finally arrived in Stelton, but in 1931, when my daughter, Shelley was four years old and son, Jon two and a half, we finally came to the Colony to stay for eleven years. Our coming coincided with what I usually refer to as "the second coming of the Ferms". In spite of their age, the Ferms were in spirit, younger than any of us; their ideas were as stimulating and invigorating as ever. It was for me a kind of homecoming, as well as a kind of vindication! To find ideas which had been vaguely struggling for expression, carried out by an unexcelled team of educators, to a degree I had not yet reached--filled me with an excitement, that to this day, I can still feel.

Psychologists, almost to a man, tell us that no individual ever fully realizes more than about one-tenth of his potential. While it may be true that mankind may not be able to achieve perfection, it certainly *is* true that mankind can be a lot better than it has been so far. The Ferms' philosophy seemed to me then and seems to me

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now, to be basically the only one on which to found a system of education that can free the individual for self mastery; to allow him to develop whatever his gifts may be, not only for himself but for the good of all. What we seemed to learn at Stelton and in the School, was that what benefits one should also benefit all. We did not develop as competing rivals, but as cooperative friends. We learned to appreciate the good work of others without in any way feeling ashamed of our own, It never occurred to anyone, I believe, to feel that one's work was either inferior or superior to that of his friends. Whether or not this fits one to live in a competitive society has always been a moot question for some, but never seemed important to me.

Creative activity, I believe, is at the bottom of human growth--and I do not mean merely drawing pretty pictures or dancing in the morning assembly. I mean any activity which requires the use of the hands, the mind and the heart,--the "whole" person, and that may seem a bit metaphysical, but I can't think of a better way to express it. It means opening the gates of the urge to create which lies within all of us and letting it have full rein. In this way, one learns to grow, to develop through trial and error, a knowledge of one's capacities and limitations--one's special channels of creativity; to obtain the strength to cope with disappointment, triumph, happiness and vicissitude.

We have talked a great deal about freedom in education without ever really defining what freedom means. It has been said by Nellie Dick and Lilian Rifkind here, that we tried to show as much by our conduct as by precept, that only the person who is truly responsible for his own conduct can be really free. I believe

that to be vital. One enslaved by emotions of greed, pride, the will to dominate, can never be truly free, for he cannot control himself, We never told a child to behave himself with an implied "or else I will *make* you behave". The quiet admonition was always "control yourself"...In other words, by saying "*You* control *yourself*", we threw the responsibility where it belonged, on the individual, himself. It really worked.

We also disavowed punishment for as the Ferms believed, and I came to believe with them, each action carries its own reaction. To the child it meant "getting one's deed back", and I remember one little chap who punched another on the nose, then turned to run away, he fell and skinned his knee. When he came crying into one of the schoolrooms, we asked him what had happened, "I got my deed back," he sobbed.

This, too, may seem metaphysical,--but as a lover and student of history --it seems to me that this "action/reaction" rhythm explains much of what others have called the pendulum theory of history. Think about it.

There is so much more to say and none of us here have done more than barely touch upon the subject of the school, the colony and its influence. But after all, isn't it self-evident? Where else could you find a group of people with such varied background and interest who are drawn back to recall friends and comrades of thirty, forty and for some, more than fifty years ago? And not for some college *class* reunion...but because of an obscure community and school, which was based on that old invitation... "Come let us with our children live." Whatever else we did, *we lived*.

Photo taken at The Free School, Albany, New York

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No matter how our paths may have diverged...no matter how some of us may have learned outward conformity, one thing emerges from the three reunions we have had so far...once one has been touched by the Stelton experience, one is never the same again. Inwardly, at least, we have been marked for life.

Jo Ann Wheeler Burbank, now in her eighties, lives in Albany. Your editor was privileged to be able to spend an afternoon recently with this perennially youthful and indomitable woman, along with her son Jon Scott, who is the chairman of the Department of Environmental Studies at the State University of New York at Albany, and with their friend, John Froebel-Parker, the great, great (dunno how many) grandson of Friedrich Froebel, who also lives in Albany and owns a fine art gallery. It was a real eye-opener to me to have this first-hand look at Stelton Colony and the New Jersey Modern School through Jo Ann's clear eyes, and to be reminded that we alternative schoolers are simply reinventing a very old wheel indeed! My thanks to Mrs. Wheeler for permission to reprint her address.

A FABLE

Nasrudin wanted to become a great reader, but his father said he wasn't smart enough and could never learn. So, Nasrudin went to a the Master and asked to become his pupil. "How long will it take for me to also become a Master? Suppose I study with you daily?"

"Three months," replied the Master.

"I cannot wait that long. I have much to leam and study. Besides, I am in a hurry. Suppose I work twice as hard. How long will it take then?"

"Three years," replied the Master.

"How is that?" asked Nasrudin. "First you say three months. Then, when I offer to work twice as hard, you say it will take twelve times as long. Let me be clear. I will work unceasingly without rest and no hardship will be too much. Then how long will it take?"

"A lifetime," replied the Master.

Nasrudin understood. Without asking for promises, he became the Master's understudy. He worked, yes, but most of all, he trusted. Finally, the Master gave Nasrudin complex material but he comprehended nothing.

"Why is it," he asked the Master, "that the harder I try, the less I get?"

"You've learned to trust me, but not yourself. Your struggle is within. Only when you give up the struggle with your own false beliels will you understand."

Nasrudin understood. In the days that lollowed, his Master gave him even more complex material to read. And, without struggling, Nasrudin understood more than ever before. But, not everything. So, he went to his Master again.

"Why is it that sometimes I get it and sometimes I don't?"

"Because that's just the way it is. We all have our moments when we doubt who we really are and stop

trusting ourselves. Just be responsible for not getting it and you'll get it."

Nasrudin soon became a Master himself.

Quantum Educational Discoveries . 1 Mill St., Burlington, VT. 05401 (802) 864-6186.

Photo taken at The Free School, Albany, New York

THREE BY JOSH:

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE...ETC.
by Josh Amundson

Thinking back to the conference I remember going through many changes regarding the NCACS and the many people involved. My feelings about all this ranged from joy to utter confusion. ! have played with many ideas about what to write for this article. As I constructed a picture of what I might say, I saw that I didn't really want to write about the details of the site, or what I did, or what it felt like. All that doesn't seem to convey the information that I want to get across. What have I *really learned*?

As my many illusions about the Coalition have fallen away I have begun to see the Coalition as simply a medium for exchange of ideas. Mediums are only as valuable as they are clear. Unless we are continually practicing unlearning our habits, tendencies, reactions, and preconceptions they will eventually clutter up the "airways" to the point where none of the creative, untamable and unpredictable energy exchange of learning will be able to occur. Emotional and reactionary ideas serve to distract and obstruct the flow of awareness/awareness of flow. The useful ideas are the ones that serve to clarify the medium. This is where our work as individuals and as a coalition comes in.

Some would say that the nature of institutions (boards, bylaws, policies, etc.) is contrary to learning because learning is changing, radical, unpredictable and institutions are generally static, rigid, unchanging. I propose that institutions can serve to maintain clarity and loosen the binds *if* it is understood that the true practice

of government involves continual unlearning, or the art of getting out of the way of the creative flow. The NCACS attempt to be an institution that serves people, contrary to position, hierarchy, power-mongering, etc., is virtually unheard of today.

One of the most beneficial aspects of the Coalition is that teaching/learning requires honestly relating with people (and situations). It is in this honest relationship that we are faced with our extraneous habits, tendencies, etc. Learning to deal with this can be difficult. You cannot make or push or force it. It is returning to a state that has always been with us. The only thing we have to do - is let it happen, open ourselves to the possibility of learning; a possibility that resides within every one of us.

So often mistakes are looked upon as problems when in actuality no learning occurs without mistakes. Mistakes have been made and will continue to be made. That is given. But how we react to any situation is up to us. We can notice the "fact" that there is a "problem/mistake" and that we don't understand it, it confuses us, makes us angry, etc. *OR* we can define the "problem/mistake" as the very vehicle for overcoming that particular limited action, thought, or state of mind. The confused, angry enemy is the same energy (YOU!) that the clear, solutional idea is (only formed differently). The possibility for change lies in, where you are putting your attention; right here, right now.

In actuality, we are continually doing *something* with our attention always learning/teaching something - continually in relationship. You are transforming yourself *at all times*. So, what were you thinking? It's very important. This "mental", "chemical" or "physical" activity determines your perceptions *and other's*

perceptions. Every action or thought directly affects ALL existence. Please understand and keep this in mind at all times. It's your responsibility to understand this.

The conference was a learning experience (could it be anything else?) and I'm happy to be part of a relatively clear medium of exchange. Everybody and everything needs truth !

Love,

Josh

Josh on the Preciousness and the Crisis on our Earth

As we enter into the nineties we face many issues, great and small. While many of these are very important, one issue overshadows them all. It is an issue of global security.

If you can, put aside for a moment the ethical, racial, and political divisions of this earth. Think about the beautiful blue-green mass of life you are a part of. For 1.6 billion years our planet has developed, producing an infinite number of ever more complex life forms. These interdependent life forms have rapidly progressed into many advanced forms while still maintaining the delicate balance that life began with. Human beings in particular have adopted many different methods of survival that are steadily becoming more and more complicated, i.e. nomadic life, herding and farming. The last few hundred years have brought astounding growth of the human mind and abilities .

Our ability to manipulate various species and elements has led us to greatly altering the world around us. In order to do things

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faster and easier we build machines which consume the oils and minerals of the earth. The unused, leftover material is discarded into the earth, water, and air. Because we want fast, pre-packaged food we use plastic and styrofoam containers which do not degrade, even after years and years. For our convenience we pen livestock into tiny cubicles for the duration of the animals' lives and feed them chemicals to promote growth and production. Agricultural produce is fertilized and sprayed with elements and chemicals which leave the soil barren after a few years of use. Because we want to be able to build cities anywhere and have more energy, we divert and dam whole rivers. Not to mention the amount of energy we put into "protecting and defending" ourselves. The list goes on and on.

For many who, for some reason or other, support these undertakings, this is seen as efficient and/or necessary. When a global perspective is taken, these efforts and their results reveal a great imbalance, a disease which has afflicted mother Earth. There are sores all over the heavenly body we call Earth, and they are growing in size. Many of them continue to spew out tons of pollution. I repeat - people continue to pollute the Earth, not realizing that they pollute their own body.

The time has come when the many things which people disagree on are being overshadowed by the stark reality. We cannot go on as we are going if we would like the human race to continue. The obvious fallacy of our way of life will become more and more obvious. Leadership and government, business and corporations, religion and life, and all such institutions will radically change or will fall out of the picture, just as dead skin falls away from the

body. Even people and life as we know it may fall out of the picture.

The saving grace of the human race is our incredible capacity for change. We know all we need to know to change all that we have started and begin a life of balance and harmony. Right now there is no need greater for us as human beings than preservation of the earth through non-interference.

Josh at the Highland School

My first week at The Highland School has caused me to reexamine many hidden presuppositions about learning and life. I remember trying to tell people at home what it was that I would be doing here.

"It's ungraded, there are no mandatory classes, and all school affairs are run by a democratic meeting." I had only theories about what that really meant or what my place at such a school would be. I have seen only fleeting glimpses of truly "free" schools in action and the possibility of my being a part of such a school was, until now, only an idealistic and hopeful dream.

How do kids learn anything when they are left to do what they want, even if it is playing all day, every day? How would they make it in public school or college if they ever wanted to go back to the "real world?" What are the teachers' responsibilities? As a teacher, should I be trying to get students to use their minds or do something? Is there a way that I have to be or impress on these kids through my own actions? Should I watch them to make sure that they don't get hurt or in trouble, or intervene in their fights? Do I

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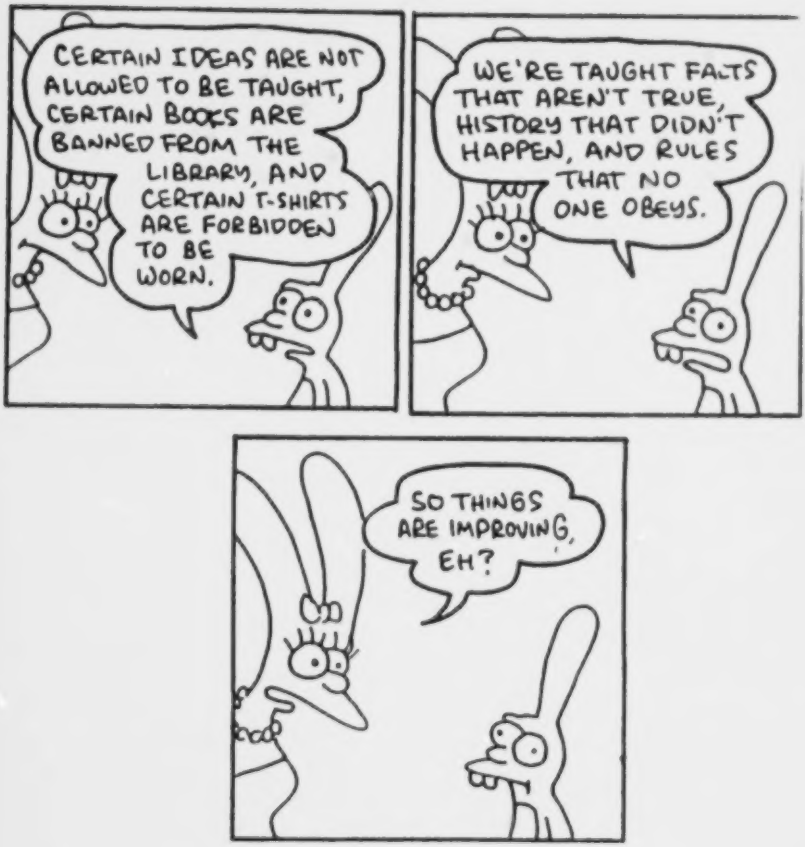
have to hide my own abilities and experience so that I don't make them feel inadequate? How much should I let my own fears, insecurities, tendencies, and, most importantly, show through? As a "teacher" at the Highland School I am impelled to face these questions.

The Highland School is based on a philosophy that is radically different than virtually all other schools and institutions. It involves an understanding that *everyone* is inherently a learner, that learning is something inseparable from life, and that there is no need to influence or manipulate people in order to get them to learn and even develop far beyond our expectations. In fact, the influence and manipulation that is commonly seen as essential to learning is actually the very thing that retards the learning process.

The Highland School does not influence students to achieve external goals specified by others. This school allows students to establish their own goals and find their own ways of achieving those goals. The Highland School is based on trust. Trust that if students are allowed to be themselves, they will learn what they need to learn. Students are allowed to pursue any interest they choose and drop it as they see fit. Sooner or later they will come to understand that there is no "authority" here who knows what needs to be learned already. If that was so all we would have to do is memorize the prescribed body of knowledge and then no more learning would be necessary. The fact is nobody can or will ever know it all. This understanding is far more valuable than *any* amount of knowledge I could "teach" them. The fact that nobody knows it all means that each individual has something special to add, it means that students

SO HOW'S SCHOOL GOING THIS YEAR?
I'M TRAPPED IN AN OVERCROWDED CLASSROOM FULL OF RESENTFUL, NEGLECTED KIDS.
WE'RE TAUGHT BY AN EXHAUSTED, UNDERPAID TEACHER ON THE VERGE OF A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN.
THE ADMINISTRATORS HATE THE TEACHERS, THE TEACHERS HATE THEIR PAY, THE KIDS HATE EVERYTHING, AND I HATE MYSELF.
OUR DAYS ARE FILLED WITH UNCHALLENGING TESTS, POINTLESS BUSY-WORK, AND MIND-NUMBING MEMORIZATION.
OUR TEXTBOOKS READ LIKE THEY'VE BEEN EDITED BY SOME SORT OF MONSTROUS DEFLAVORIZING MACHINE.


CERTAIN IDEAS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO BE TAUGHT, CERTAIN BOOKS ARE BANNED FROM THE LIBRARY, AND CERTAIN T-SHIRTS ARE FORBIDDEN TO BE WORN.
WE'RE TAUGHT FACTS THAT AREN'T TRUE, HISTORY THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN, AND RULES THAT NO ONE OBEYS.
SO THINGS ARE IMPROVING, EH?

are teachers just as teachers are students. And it means that learning can be fun, free and creative.

Teachers are usually the ones that need to learn (or actually, unlearn) the most. Adults are faced with many more years of the conditioning and programming that works to shut off the intuitive

and natural functions of true learning that are inherent in every individual. Children usually have a great advantage in this learning process simply because they have lived through much less of this manipulative and repressive conditioning.

As a teacher at The Highland school I am not required or expected to adhere to some preconceived curriculum, maintain order or make sure that the students know something (though sometimes I choose to do some of these things). My primary responsibility is recognizing the inherent learning spirit within us all and *not interfering* with the natural process of life that is learning. This does not mean that teachers are superfluous. On the contrary, the presence of more mature and experienced people who know their way around is imperative to students and learning.

Fundamental to recognizing the inherent learning spirit in others is recognizing it in yourself. The common ideas and ways of teaching must be transformed and transcended to reflect this philosophy, or understanding of human nature. In this context "teaching" becomes an art of *not* using the models of influence and manipulation that repress learning. Without resort to such models you have only learners (some more experienced than others) and many naturally unencumbered learning relationships are possible.

Josh Amundson, graduate from The Farm School in Summertown, Tennessee, and now a teacher at The Highland School in Highland, West Virginia, has been freely sharing his heart, mind and soul with us all for a while. Josh strikes me as a prophet and visionary in the making, and I am honored to offer him space in the journal once again - and whenever he has something he would like to share!

PROFILED SCHOOLS:

HISTORY OF THE FREE SCHOOL
(Part 2)
From School to Community
by Mary M. Leue

The year we had just experienced did at least two things for us. First, it taught us a lot about what our values of schooling were and how important to us. These values had been there underlying our ways of doing things, but this year had, as it were, tested them in the fire of keen opposition and misfortune, and had helped us to consolidate what was real, in the sense that it had withstood the test of experience as opposed to being simply theoretical. Second, the year's events had brought home with unmistakable clarity the fact that you cannot be all things to all people, but must accept the fact that people differ widely in their beliefs concerning children's education - and consequently, it behooves you to be as open and as clear as possible in offering a school to people as an alternative for their children. Doing this conscientiously means that you lose some right away, but failing to do so entails the far greater agony of learning after spending a great deal of time and effort to do a conscientious and loving job with a child that it is not what the parents had in mind at all, and that you fail for this reason - namely, that you and they are unwittingly working at cross-purposes.

I can say that we were able to understand this after a year of struggle with parents concerning who had the task of defining what was to happen, as well as what *was* happening! Actually, this process has proved to be the most important activity in which we

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engage in working with a family, and we are still occasionally surprised to discover a dimension of a family's value system we had not anticipated beforehand, with the unfortunate result that we lose the child.

Another interesting discovery we made along these lines has been the way in which the form of an institution follows the way in which it functions. One has a goal in mind, and one encounters obstacles in achieving that goal. The question is always, if something in the form of the institution is working to help create this obstacle, how can we change that form to resolve the problem? This is fairly straightforward. But the next question is, what effect will this change have on the way the school operates internally; and will the change in some way change our goal by producing different results from the ones we had had in mind? And if so, what? My surmise is that a lot of schools start out being quite flexible and even experimental, and thus, exciting places for children to go to school, but end up becoming a caricature of themselves as a result of modifying their goals instead of retaining their original insight into how a school can be. They fit the children increasingly into the structure of the school instead of continuing to fit the structure to the child; and the excitement dies! When this happens, my belief is that it is the last thing parents and most teachers are likely to notice, but will attribute the change to the children themselves, and will act accordingly, in the time-honored way of blaming the victim.

Another "solution" to such a problem may be to adopt a belief that, after all, schooling (in a formal sense of the word) isn't very important (as Neill seems to have done (at least if you take his writings literally, which is always a mistake!) at Summerhill). If a

child is bright, he can always pick up skills elsewhere when he decides he wants them - and that to insist he learn them in *this* school would be tantamount to joining the other schools this one was set up to be an alternative *to*. Hm. True? Not to me. At least, not as a prescription for setting school policy. Let me explain, because it sounds as though I were saying, "But of course you've got to make children learn!" No, no. That's not it, for me.

To me "not making them do things" is a necessary strategy for living with kids who have strong ideas about what they do or do not want to do. Yes, I am going to let them "do their own thing," but I am not going to characterize my willingness to let them make their own choices as necessarily indicative of their inherent wisdom or autonomy - because it may not be either of those things. It may be indicative of inner pathology which warrants my deep concern, and ignoring which may constitute gross negligence! I do not want to use the modality of regulatory definition to bury my failures or send them off to other schools, as Neill did, for example. I know, because I asked him and he said, "Of course!"

Thus I cannot label as unequivocally splendid everything I choose to advocate and practice in my school. I know the "line" concerning "real democracy," but I can't tout it as a universal container for my own motivation. I'm not that much in command of my own "shadow" side, which sometimes takes on a life of its own. My motivation to pursue real democracy is sometimes absolutely true of me - but not necessarily. I can't turn my intentionality into a generalization! I personally love teaching and learning too much to toss them into the melting pot of "self-regulation" by or for kids. It seems to me a naive discount of myself as teacher to turn this much

over to them. My kids love learning because I do - among other reasons. I refuse to leave myself out of the equation!

There is, of course, a real paradox involved in such a philosophy of education as I have just expounded. At first glance it doesn't appear to have anything in common with the outlook on total educational self-regulation/choice so brilliantly explicated by Dan Greenberg in all his pieces on the philosophy of Sudbury Valley School nor with Summerhill or The Highland School in West Virginia or Lewis-Wadhams (now defunct), to name a few examples of self-defined democratic alternative schools. Hey! - I'm not doubting that they are truly democratic! That's not what I'm on about!

The paradox, for me, inheres in the fact that, with the possible exception of old Neill, who was himself a walking paradox, all of these good people may be leaving out of the accounts they give of their schools the strong bias toward learning and the transmission of our common cultural heritage inherent in their own backgrounds and the backgrounds of other staff in their schools and thus brought to the children in the form of intangibles such as their personal impact as models, their school's educational/cultural facilities, initial selection of teachers and so on - and thus of fascinating alternatives subliminally available to children. This marriage between the ideological Spartanism of their words and the Athenian cultural wealth of the environments they provide for their kids creates a strange but wonderfully paradoxical environment which must be for these kids inherently fascinating and exciting - but to subsume all of this under the rubric of "democracy" strikes me as (unintendedly) obfuscatory. And it gets expressed at

the expense of a lot of other alternative educational programs which may actually be equally good for kids but just not "do" it the same way!

My belief is that there may indeed be a large gap between such an ideological-cum-experiential mix and many run-of-the-mill middle class alternative schools - as Dan insists there is - perhaps, as he says, even most such schools! If so, I would surmise that these alternative schools may have, as it were, fallen inadvertently into a false position, perhaps in one of the ways I suggested above of gradually modified policy-making in response to unresolved problems - as seems to have happened to Lu Vorys' Metropolitan School in Columbus, Ohio (see profile in the Summer, 1990 issue of ΣΚΟΛΕ), and to a Coalition member school in a down-state county of New York which a woman (one of the founders) recently told me about. The latter finally succumbed a year or so ago for lack of students, having retreated a step at a time from their original policy of curricular and other forms of self-regulation by students.

Or perhaps it may happen for the reasons involving governance which Dan refers to in his article cited above ("Subtleties of a Democratic School."), influenced by philosophical left-wing political bias or a group mind mentality, as opposed to the pursuit of individualism and democracy in all aspects of the school - according to Dan. I would tend to classify such differences as a *socialistic* (or group-oriented) outlook versus a constitutionally *anarchistic* (or individualistic, a la Kropotkin) outlook - but that's my bias, I'm sure.

Basically, I believe education to be a fundamental *political* - not just a social - problem of democracy. We have the schools

which our relative maturity as a people permits and reflects. Approaching possible solutions to our educational problems needs to be regarded as akin to therapy for a national as well as a personal disease. In proposing specific measures intended to provide symptomatic relief for these problems, we run the risk of masking a far more fundamental illness which we may be reluctant to face as a people and a culture. To me the basic problem is often one of institutionalized heartlessness, and as such is shared by us all, alternative schoolers, home schoolers and public schoolers alike.

Pursuing my suggestion that education is a political as much as it is a social phenomenon, it would follow that struggling to resolve some of our national problems involves practicing, among other things, the art of the possible. Or, as the popular slogan goes, "Think globally, act locally." And so, in this sense, I might say of us that we in our school carry on here year after year waiting and hoping that the rest of the country will catch up with us, delighted when some individual teacher or instructor in a local school of education - or a person from another country! - notices us and wonders if we have anything to contribute to their understanding. Over the years we have been visited by educationists from Canada, France, England, and Germany, but have never heard the extent to which we were able to give them something of value after they went back home. It is only recently, since we have been "discovered" by the Japanese, that anything we stand for seems to be sinking in. Well, thank goodness for that! **ARIGATO, NIPPON!**

Back to the narrative. Having been refused by our three self-made millionaires, we had to look elsewhere for the money we needed. Actually, the neighborhood itself into which we wished to

move provided us the solution to our financial problem. What was going on was a violent and destructive process among two groups, one a long-term, stable, and largely elderly Italian population, some first generation, most second generation, who had lived and raised their families in row houses they owned and kept up - and the other, an ever-increasing number of black welfare recipient tenants living in the row house apartments which had been sold to absentee landlords when their Italian owners grew prosperous and moved to the suburbs, leaving behind only the poor and the elderly. These black families, mostly single parent, had many children who were growing up largely unsocialized and unsupervised amid squalid neglect and despair as their mothers struggled to survive, moving from decaying building to decaying building, struggling to raise children with no parent support whatsoever, struggling with hostile and contemptuous welfare and clinic personnel, struggling to find momentary pleasures with black men who were themselves filled with despair and rage, struggling to defend the existence of their children by defending their behavior against all comers, no matter how delinquent or how inhuman that behavior might be. In other words, this was an armed camp, and battle lines were clearly drawn.

The advantage to us in this unfortunate, even tragic, situation was that the Catholic War Veterans as a group turned out to be such dedicated racists that they were determined to sell their building, even at considerable sacrifice, just so long as they could turn their backs on this neighborhood. We got a very good bargain. Additionally, in spite of the general policy being universally practiced by banks at that time of "red-lining" areas of the inner city they considered bad financial risks for mortgage investment, I did

manage to find one sympathetic mortgage officer willing to take a risk with us. We had to do a lot of hurdle-jumping too complicated to go into, but the upshot of it was that the school was able to move out of the storefront we had been using for three months into our new building before the end of November.

Moving into this wonderful building gave us all a marvelous boost in morale. We began making all sorts of innovations in providing the children with low-cost or donated educational equipment, such as a four-foot stack of 3'x 6' sheets of a product called TriWall, a three-layered corrugated cardboard sheet akin in stability and strength to plywood but far easier and cheaper to buy and to build with. We made bookcases, cubby holes, children's climbing and stacking equipment, tables, stools - oh, loads of other things! Then a woman who had done some printing for us gave us an equally large stack of 3'x3' sheets of glue-backed, squared paper called MacTac, which we put to equally extensive uses! In fact, you might say that our school for a number of years ran on Tri-Wall/MacTac power - since we sure didn't have money!

Almost immediately, we began attracting new families, a process which was enhanced by the fact that we asked the newspapers to run a feature on us, which they did. Life in our new neighborhood proved to be at least as exciting as it had been in the old one. The black children living within a block of us began begging to come inside, even beating on the door to be let in (We still have the cracks in our door panels to show for it!). Middle-class white mothers shrank back from the assaults of these black children in terror, and a couple even took their darling little blonde girls out of the school, claiming that it was too chaotic for them, that their children needed

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more "structure," (nothing to do with race or class, of course). When we sent the neighborhood children home for permission to attend our school, most were refused.

The word seemed to have gotten around very quickly that we were "not a real school." So we decided to start a pre-school which they *would* recognize as "real," because it would be relevant to their need to find a cheap, reliable, and friendly place to leave their small children while they went to work. This we could do. Soon, we had a group of around eight three- and four-year-olds, mostly black neighborhood, with two mothers in charge. This took place on the second floor of our building, which really was ideally suited for the purpose.

But we still had our financial problem. It was quite clear that we could not expect to survive indefinitely paying teachers nothing, yet we were equally determined not to become a high tuition school. I didn't need salary, since my husband was a college teacher, but Bruce was cleaning offices after hours and on weekends in order to stay afloat, and his wife wanted to quit her job and have a baby, but felt she could not do so unless he could bring in a more reliable income. At this point, I bethought me of Jonathan Kozol's suggestion for solving this problem which he proposes in his book *Free Schools* (now reissued as *Alternative Schools*): run a business! I began discussing the possibility of setting up a textbook sale company. Nobody wanted to do this, and I realized I didn't, either. But the idea of a business stuck with me.

I have always been attracted to houses, have always wanted to own several. Well, I found a wonderful three-story house for sale on the next street over from ours, owned by an Italian family

disgusted with the deterioration of the neighborhood and well enough off to buy elsewhere. I bargained, and we got it. Now I had to get tax exemption from the city for this building. I went about gathering information on the hows and whos of setting up a non-profit corporation, and finally managed to get it accepted by the state. Non-profit status by the city was more difficult, but we finally managed that, too. Within the space of about two years, we acquired four more buildings, one of them a garage next door to the school, one of them an abandoned building being auctioned by the county. All told, our six buildings cost approximately $40,000, most of which I fronted for the corporation, since we had been unable to find any other donors. This money I had inherited from my mother and my aunt, neither of whom had earned it, so I felt it only proper that this unearned money go into our project. I have never regretted this decision for one moment. That $40,000 is now worth at least $500,000 in the money of today and at today's real estate values for this area. I feel amply repaid by this knowledge! At the present writing, they bring in $2,000 a month in income, from the renting out of apartments.

But having the buildings did more than provide us with a business. It gave us space to offer people who wanted to teach with us in lieu of salary. That and one hearty meal at noon, courtesy of the government's free and reduced price lunch, went a long way toward supporting them, and we were able to offer a small weekly supplement to eke out a fairly decent rate. We soon had three new teachers, all of whom had sought us out, agreed to our terms, and started right in. Additionally, we made a connection with Antioch College's work-study program, and began taking on a student

teacher per quarter, and then two at a time. This was the height of the national preoccupation with "free schools," and what we lacked in expertise and experience, we made up for in excitement. By 1974, we had became a community of some thirty children and seven full-time teachers plus two or sometimes three part-time or student assistants.

Our challenge now became, and has continued to be, to become fully relevant to the families of the neighborhood who had only the public schools of the ghetto as an alternative to us, not just or primarily to the families of the children we had begun busing in from other parts of the city. The popular preoccupation with the idea that school can be a place children love for its own sake was secondary in the minds of these folks to a clear insistence that their children learn to read, write, and cipher. One thing we discovered early on was that it is a lot easier to recognize what is wrong with schools and even what changes need to be made than it actually is to do it successfully yourself with all comers - and since we now had a lot of pre-schoolers and elementary school children whose parents would be judging us solely by our educational success, we knew we had to do a far better job than the public schools - and our group was certainly as diverse and multi-problematic as theirs.

The goals of such parents all too often clashed head-on with those of their children! We found ourselves spending far more time teaching kids to deal justly with personal conflicts of all sorts than with the three R's, although our arts and crafts program was always excellent. We understood how educationally relevant this effort at the learning of self-government was, but on the other hand, we did not want to lose kids, and parents had begun letting us know how

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Albany's Free School, June, 1988

dissatisfied they were with this emphasis. Since we actually agreed, it was a struggle, because the kids themselves had natural priorities which were perfectly valid in their *own* terms, and had to be respected - and yet, we needed to teach skills as well as work straightening out tangled feelings and beliefs! Our council meetings at this time sometimes took several hours out of the day. Trying to mix social classes and diverse racial and ethnic groups on a genuinely peer basis is more difficult than it might seem. Or so we discovered.

My approach to this issue included a strong belief that teachers themselves need to be very clear and straight in their thinking and stable in their emotions in order to deal with the demands made upon them by kids with great needs, and yet we could not afford to hire therapeutically trained teachers, nor did we wish to! Part of my belief was that our school *had* to be open to all comers, and that this needed to include teachers as well as families. This policy had its painful moments, although I believe it has worked very much in our favor over the long run. I remember one teacher we had early on who suddenly "broke" and picked up a black boy of around eight and slammed him onto the floor in great fury! Fortunately, the child was not hurt. Yes, there had been provocation, but such a reaction was intolerable - to him as well as to everyone else.

We set up a personal growth group which met every week for three to four hours, at which time teachers and others who wished to join could work through their hangups. This was in 1974. That group is still going strong, with eighteen members at present, seven of whom are originals. I believe the continued existence of this

group has been the core of the continuing life of the school and of the community itself. We also have teachers' meetings, for attending to the working of the school,, but this other group is special. We have learned all sorts of ways of giving people support to make changes over the years, such as transactional analysis, reparenting, Option, rebirthing and Gestalt techniques, among others.

The other benefit of having these buildings was that we began attracting families who wanted an apartment to live in, and who decided to let their children attend our school, usually because they found us friendly people to deal with in a very unfriendly world. In the process of rehabilitating our ten buildings for occupancy, we began to acquire a lot of skills - plumbing, wiring, sheetrocking, carpentry, glazing, floor sanding, plastering, masonry, roofing, and so on.

Since most of our buildings were located on parallel streets, their back yards touched. When we had acquired them, these yards were filled with rubble, so we began clearing them out, planting gardens, and using them for socializing. Our properties had begun taking on more and more of the characteristics of a village, as we enjoyed our barbecues, birthday and holiday celebrations, and generally spending more time together.

One summer we had a barn-raising in the back yard of one of our teacher-families to get ready for a donated bred doe (female goat). Soon after, she gave birth to twin doe kids, and our serious farm-in-the city was launched! At present we have three does, the milk being shared by three families, a flock of chickens, who get fed mainly from the leftovers from school lunch, and bees.

Teachers who had come to teach with us as a novelty began seriously settling down and investing themselves in a more permanent and more monogamous pattern of living. The group became a kind of center for this new village which was coming into being, serving both to create a common ground of interest and to offer interpersonal support for dealing with the strains of getting through the hangups which divide people.

School families from farther away became attracted to this village atmosphere and began moving closer, either by finding a nearby rental apartment or by actually buying up an old or abandoned building. We found our rehabilitation skills very popular indeed, and began gathering to help one another in weekend "work parties," at which twenty of us would pool our efforts on one place, accomplishing rapid and low-cost miracles of building rescue and refurbishment. More and more, our streets became after-school and summertime "play streets," with the old Italian people serving gladly as built-in stoop supervisors of their activities.

By 1978, so many young couples who were connected with us in one way or another were getting pregnant and coming up against the up-tightness and cost of obstetrical care that I decided to organize a pregnancy and childbirth support group which would function both to help them find what they wanted and would also function as an advocacy group for more enlightened and liberal attitudes toward birth. From this beginning, we moved on to the setting up of a center in the basement of one of our buildings which offered medical and legal self-help education at no or very low cost to anyone who wanted to use us. We named it The Family Life Center. One of our reasons for doing this was certainly a need to

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solve the problem of the high cost of medical insurance for our school people, but the interesting thing was the fact that the more we worked with families to help them get what they wanted, the more we realized how revolutionary our concept was, and how much of a logical extension of the concept of a school which belongs to the families who use it.

It is my belief that the two institutions which create the worst feelings of helplessness on the part of families are the educational and the medical ones. A parent who runs into conflict with either of them can be seriously damaged, even jailed! People who accept the consequences for their children of the model of life on which these social institutions are based have no trouble they cannot handle, but if they cannot accept these beliefs and still have no other options, then they are going to feel bound into the larger society and hence to its rules. To belong to one of the clinics run by medically-insured health plans or to have group medical insurance necessitates a certain level of income, which insures that poor people have their "own" medical care and effectively shuts out anyone else. A young couple wanting to have a baby is going naturally to assume the necessity of a certain level of income in order to pay for this child's medical care. But even this distinction of class doesn't touch the heart of the problem as I see it. The real problem is the extent to which our society robs parents and children of their autonomy, starting right at birth, and continuing on through childhood. The outcome is, or may be, good for the society (although I actually do not believe that it is), but it creates all sorts of problems for the recipients of the "system." I'm not laying all our social problems at the doors of the schools and doctors' offices, but I am saying that

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in having taken over the traditional teaching functions which once belonged to parents and neighbors, they are responsible by default for the fact that people grow up and have children without either proper personal or social support and information with which to play the roles.

There are other agencies we have thought up like the Money Game, a mutual investment group which enables people with low incomes to invest in bank savings plans usually available only to people who put in lots of moola, Matrix, a birthing center for which we find medical backup among doctors who favor midwife-managed birth, and Rainbow Camp, a summer recreation/camping/weekend workshop facility - a lodge on a small lake in the mountains near Albany which we have bought and use together..

Looking back at how we have developed our ways of governing ourselves, I suppose in the beginning I would have to say I had a lot to do with how decisions came to be made, because of having to get the school going the way I wanted it to go. It may be that this fact has led to our habit of seeking consensus on most decision-making that affects us all. I hate factionalism. Being a pretty decisive person, I guess the consensus tended to go more in the direction I wanted it to than not at first - but what that did was to discourage people who couldn't cope with my ways. Those who have stayed on are a very compatible and cooperative group of people who value autonomy as much as I do! Consensus defined in this way is not at all the "group mind" default process Dan describes so vividly. It is a way of grappling with problems long enough until their resolution in depth finally emerges. This is Quaker consensus, and is a function of true individualism.

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The longer we have worked and lived with one another, the more we have come to respect one another and to value the process which leads to that consensus. We thoroughly enjoy one another's company, and spend a lot of time giving and going to one another's parties. We have had four weddings, and ten babies have been born to families in "the village." Because two of us are nurses, one having decided to take nurse's training after teaching in the school for eight years, we have been able to do a lot of labor coaching in the hospital with various school families, and have even done some home births - mostly with community families. The babies in the school who are between the ages of birth and two years seem to me a breed apart, so alert, outgoing, playful, active, and affectionate that it is a joy just to watch them together.

The school itself has changed very little in its overall composition over the twenty-two years we've been in the South End. For a while there were fewer black faces in the school as the neighborhood became increasingly "yuppyized," but we went out of our way to proselytize for the school in nursery-schools, daycare centers and churches to let parents from the area know we exist - and the result in recent years has been, again, a very good mix of kids from white and black liberal middle class families and white and black poor families.

As we have learned more and more comfort and trust in our ability to teach how well what we do works, we have become more and more relaxed about academic skills, especially knowing that our graduates have fared as well as they have, whether or not they left us with their 3 R's well in hand! We never had put much emphasis on formal classroom activities anyway, but sometimes felt a bit

Photo taken at The Free School, Albany, New York

guilty about it - so, since this discovery fitted our initial presuppositions about the nature of learning anyway, being able to live our convictions has allowed us to become a place of great universal joy and satisfaction! Our community kids, growing up in the village environment, going to the village school, learning with their friends' parents as their teachers, helping with farm chores - surrounded by people they love and who love them - are extra-ordinary human beings! Or maybe I am just prejudiced.

Well, I guess I am, at that. I remember one early fall evening a few years ago when I was walking down to a meeting that was being held at Betsy and Chris' house (a house that had originally cost $500 at auction and had been slated for demolition when the young couple took it on. I only wish you could see it now!). At any rate, as I turned the corner and started down the narrow, steep street on which eight of "our" houses are located, Ellen and Larry were just walking out of their half-done house with young Gabby perched on Larry's shoulders. Ned and Margaret were painting their new front steps and waved as we walked down the hill. Mickie peered out of her front window and gave a cheery hello. Howie, Nancy and Kaylana were working in their garden. Billy and Bridget were playing hide-and-seek with Kaleb from up the hill, and their mother was chatting with Edith on the front steps. Missie and Tyler were just rounding the corner from Elm St., and behind them ran Junie, scrambling to catch up. The golden eveninglight gave that village scene a kind of universal quality almost biblical in its feeling tone. That scene has stayed with me ever since. To me, the village has a special quality that makes it mine in a way nothing else can equal. It is home. It is life!

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SERIALIZED LONGER PAPERS:

FREE FORMING - Chapter VII
People Jazz:
Creating our world through communication
by Robert Skenes

Our images of belief are clothed in the flesh and blood of reality by action....Blake wrote that the man who did not believe in miracles surely made it certain that he would never take part in one (1973, 61, 114).

--Joseph Chilton Pearce

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to reiterate and expand on the idea presented in Chapter I that people create and shape the largest portion of the realities they perceive and experience. It is important to look at some of the ways in which we are, on the one hand, bound by the communication habits and ways of looking at the world which are already part of us below consciousness and, on the other hand, at ways in which our abilities to communicate and dialogue with each other and with environments give us the power to recreate and transform ourselves. For understanding of this process of believing and communicating can be useful in our personal efforts to redirect and change our living patterns--whether along lines of social openness and individual self-actualizing which I have described above or along any other lines. For some readers, these ideas will not be easy to grasp. However, if you are willing to struggle a bit with them and to ponder the examples and illustrations, I believe understanding will emerge for you.

We Can Become Other Than What We Are Now

There are so many different realities or ways in which we *could* create our selves. The potential for becoming *more* than what we have been, than what we are, than even what we imagine, is tremendous, if not infinite. "More" refers not to any quantities, but to qualities of our existence--joy, love, creation and laughter, as well as pain, anguish, loneliness and despair.

Today, those of us who feel that something is lacking in our relationships and our lives, but who aren't quite sure what it is, have made a choice by default. By not choosing to do otherwise, we have become what we are. Unless we each make that choice, as individuals, it is likely that we will never become other than what we are already.

Personally, I have come to this study because I am no longer willing to simply go along with and be controlled or "guided" by institutions and social customs when I disagree with the values they reinforce. I am dissatisfied, not just with aspects of my self, but with much of that around me which has contributed to making me what I have become.

I want to engage in a dynamic process of recreating my self, and thereby recreating my environment of human relationships and institutions, and thereby recreating my self in new says that I and any others conceive as more fun and more fulfilling. Somehow my viscera tells me that something more is to be experienced from living on this planet than being considered a good consumer, good worker, good lover, good parent, and so on--as judged by society. Something, some action, seems missing--hiding, neglected in our

human and communicational potentials. I feel not unfulfilled in my human relationships, but under-fulfilled. I ask myself: "How many people do I feel deep friendships with? Why is so much interaction at work (and sometimes at home) a pretense of politics and guardedness when it could be friendly and cooperative and sharing? Why are my children treated at school as if their thoughts and feelings matter less than getting through the chapter? Why are my feelings and my dignity neglected in favor of procedure and policy in my relationships with health care and other institutions?

I am both frustrated and annoyed from hearing people express dissatisfaction about something as if it were unchangeable, as if fate or natural law had precluded all other possibilities. I can imagine being more fulfilled and I struggle and strive to structure my reality to that imagining. And as I do so, that imagining changes. This study is a part of my imagining and striving.

As I become more aware, this blur of feeling starts to focus. Coming into view is not One Way, but a number of social patterns and forgotten or culturally ignored ways of being and doing. Oftentimes these threaten our learned realities, our cultural habits, our patterned ways of seeing. They do not fit and flow with the mainstream.

Yet they are now popping up everywhere. People are starting schools, becoming midwives, forming healing groups, meditating, forming businesses on the basis of participation, learning imagery and trance uses for problem-solving. And more and more people are standing up for their beliefs by petitioning and marching and protesting and suing and boycotting for numerous causes. The views of reality these actions put forward are becoming

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widespread as more and more persons talk about, experience and participate in them.

That these things are happening in our culture is a healthy sign. For I believe that this diversity offers an expanded arena for individual fulfillment. I find this cacophony of opportunities and choices encouraging because it is the essence of what America is all about--freedom. The more that people begin taking an active part in improving and enriching their own lives, the more they are freed from those institutions and social customs which would control them.

This has been the thrust of my efforts at sketching some rough images of social and community openness and of the fully functioning person. In painting and exploring these images in thought and action I am less interested in what we have been than I am in what we might become. That they are sketchy and incomplete at this point doesn't upset me, for their incompleteness means that others who use them will have to flesh them out themselves. Thereby they will function more as tools and rough guides than as prescriptions.

While such idealistic views as give rise to these images do involve the economics of competition for resources (which include power and beliefs and commitments), it seems to me that they have as much to do with the possibilities and potentialities we can *conceive of* and are willing *to strive for.* The communicational characteristics of these kinds of conceiving and striving form the core of our lives. They are what I wish to explore in this chapter.

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Creating Our Selves and Our Worlds Through Communication

Many of the ways we have organized our selves into cultures and societies have had the effect of limiting us, of wastefully caging our capacities and freedoms. This social control has gone overboard. Yet even though we sometimes feel locked into our customary patterns of acting, we still have the power to become other than what we are already. We still create and recreate and reaffirm our selves by communicating with one another. Let us explore this process briefly before discussing in the next chapter some of the specific actions that can be taken by readers who want to start sailing via images of opening and self-actualizing.

Compared with most other animals, we humans have lengthy periods of infancy, childhood, adolescence and so on. This means that we have long times for differing kinds of development during which we soak in much information about our environments and ourselves as we penetrate those environments. In other words, we humans continue *learning* and *growing* throughout our lives. The lengthy periods of infancy, childhood, adolescence and adulthood afford us the time to play with and develop our physiological and imaginative and symbolic processes--the tools we have that make us tremendously flexible and malleable.

We shape our potentials for being and becoming through communicating with the organisms and settings engulfing us from birth--and before.

The versatility of this human characteristic of making our selves, our personhood, out of the communication experiences we have is sometimes mind-boggling. For example, consider Guy

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Lafrancois' account of the child, who in 1951, was discovered in an Irish chickenhouse:

> I first met Chicken on one of those long, lazy days of early fall....I was a young lad of eleven years....He came shuffling toward me, crouched and bent over, his arms hanging by his sides, and his hands slightly curled backwards. As he approached, he twisted his head from side to side, looking at me with a beady, darting glance, and making small clucking noises deep in his throat. When he was about three feet away he stopped, cocked his head to one side, and stared at me with one eye. I stared back stunned.
>
> "What's your name?" I finally managed to ask. He cocked his head a bit more. I repeated the question. "Cluck," he answered. I realized then that he was the chicken-boy, Robert Edward Cuttingham, the boy whose feebleminded parents had left him too long and too often with the chickens. The rumor was that he always slept in the chicken coop...perched on a railing, and that when he awoke in the morning he filled the air with a crowing noise....
>
> One day the school superintendent visited the Cuttinghams and reminded them that their son should be attending school. They readily agreed that he should go, and the dignified superintendent returned to school with Chicken scurrying along behind, occasionally stopping to peck at something, and then dashing frantically to catch up, all the while clucking, peeping, and chirping, much like a chick darting about behind its mother.
>
> In time, his teacher discovered that clucks, chirps, peeps, and a peculiar eerie crowing were the extent of Chicken's vocabulary; while he was not afraid of people, he had neither the desire nor the ability to socialize, and he was not likely to learn much in school, particularly since he refused to stay indoors. He had soon learned there was nothing to eat on the classroom floor (1973, 21, 22).

This is a dramatic example of how our communication experiences shape our realities. We have come to think of human worlds as distinguished by the use of symbols--language, art, mathematics. To

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us, the chicken-boy hardly seems human because his communication experiences consisted of clucks and crowings; and those were the communication forms he carried inappropriately into human culture. We might be tempted to conclude that the youth grew up without culture. And indeed he did so far as culture is a human invention. However, the chicken-boy learned the kinds of things humans learn in culture. He learned appropriate communication forms and postures. His glances were darting one-sided and penetrating--like a chicken's. His scurrying gait interrupted by ground-pecking forages for food was a chicken walk. Needless to say, a boy of the genus homo is not a chicken. However, the remarkable ability of the lad to become chicken-like is a bizarre illustration of Pearce's point that humans have an innate "capacity and drive to create a culture....It is an enormous potential that realizes itself against the most extreme odds" (1973, 55).

Lacking a culture of humans to grow in and learn from, chicken-boy was shaped by the "culture" of the henhouse. This "shaping" is a process of communication. The human was malleable and flexible enough to become chicken-like, more so than any chicken could ever become humanlike.

With humans, unlike other animals, it would seem that we have been given something extra--whether by evolution, some God, or some chance accident in the cosmos. Although we are still limited in our physical form by our genes and by certain biological necessities for the maintenance of life, we have been vastly freed to create our communicational and social realities rather than accept them or die. The limits of our abilities to creatively adapt in the

world have been expanded by a *quantum* , compared to the limits of our nearest animal relatives.

Communication has often been viewed as one of two basic life processes. On the one hand, we exchange energy with our environments. We take in food and water, convert them to energy, and use that energy to interact with our environments. On the other hand, we take in information about our environments and ourselves and most often put it into symbolic form via images and words. We use this communication to shape ourselves and our worlds. To a greater extent than is true for any other creatures on this earth, the worlds of people are communicational worlds.

We take in information, consume it, digest it, generate it ourselves and give it out--all both consciously and unconsciously. This is analogous to our metabolic processes. While it is through our metabolism that our bodies are nourished and flourish or wither, it is through the basic life process of communication that we humans construct our "communicational realities" on which we base our being and acting in the world.

We create what we *believe* to be reality, but what we create is a reflection of how *we* see our surroundings filtered through our own organism. Thus, we and our environments are intimately wedded. For we act according to what we think about our environments which, in turn, are our and our associates' creations. A large--perhaps the largest--proportion of the environments which co-determine us are our *images* and *beliefs* concerning them.

This is not such a "new" idea about the nature of persons. We find it in writings from antiquity to contemporary statements about the distinctive characteristics of human life:

Whatever is received is received according to the nature of the recipient.

--Thomas Aquinas

Man disposes himself and construes his disposition as the world (in LeShan, 1968, 85).

--Dogen, 13th century Zen master

Knowing is not the process by which ready-made objects impress themselves upon the mind but is the process by which the self renders sensations significant by reading itself into them. (in Thayer, 1963, 234).

--John Dewey

In every act of perception we select one of the infinite number of possibilities and thus we also limit the number of possibilities for the future (in LeShan, 1969, 81).

--W. Heisenberg

Where your thinking is, there is your experience;
As a man thinks, so is he;
That which I feared is come upon me;
Think and grow rich;
Creative visualization for fun and profit;
How to find friends by being who you are (1977, p. 13).

--Richard Bach

We perceive our worlds largely as reflections of ourselves. I use the plural form of world here because every person has a slightly different world, although some aspects touch and overlap for groups of us in friendship, family, business, culture.

Studies on perception illustrate that we do not passively receive sensory impressions from a world out there. Rather, we selectively perceive; and much or most of that selectivity is determined by our feelings, goals, and purposes at the time and for

the future and by our past experiences as we bring them to bear on the situation.

Studies of people in other cultures teach us that there are any number of ways of perceiving the world--perhaps almost infinite possibilities. In our cultures we tend to learn a few of the possible ways; and so long as we abide by those relatively few ways, other possibilities are not open to us.

However, since many ways of experiencing reality exist, we have the potential at any time to transcend the family or cultural views which we have learned and reinforced by our actions. Through transformations in our beliefs and thoughts and feelings we create new worlds, new realities. Thus, our communicational realities "are in effect the major portion of our human ecology. As such, they essentially determine the human condition....It is our communicational realities which inspire us, which drive us mad, which provide us our most exquisite pleasures, which propel us to the brink of disaster" (Thayer, 1968b, 66; 1971, 1617).

Herein lies a paradox. On the one hand, we have so many possibilities for choice. On the other hand, as soon as we embrace or join with others in agreement on some possibilities, we exclude others Our agreements and thus our realities are always evolving out of our communicating with others and with our selves. The direction of this evolving is a matter of aesthetic choice. We choose what pleases and gratifies us from what is available--what fits into our desires and ways of being in the world.

Unfortunately, however, these are still rather radical ideas among many of the priests of modern science and the purveyors of our material and profit oriented culture. Far too many doctors,

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politicians, business people, corporate managers, lawyers, social scientists, teachers, parents and others are so engrossed in and enamoured with their visions of manipulation and control that they would not even consider such threatening notions, They prefer to believe that the way they see the world is the way it is or ought to be--for everybody.

But we can change our selves. By shifting our energies of commitment and priority among our realities, what is possible for us changes. Yet how many of us, though not altogether satisfied with our selves and our social environments, settle for the ease, the comfort and the safety of being "realists" and "knowing" our possibilities? How many of us do not dare to entertain acting on our dissatisfaction because we don't like a struggle, especially with our selves. Because we humans create our realities does not necessarily mean that we are in control of all we create. For what we create turns back and controls and binds us in many ways when we aren't looking or thinking about it.

Re-creating Our Selves Through Awareness and Action

Value, as Whitehead said, is limitation and both involve faith. Valuing and choosing accordingly involve faith that a choice is worth sacrificing other possibilities. Yet with our basic communicational realities, we are not always immediately aware of other possibilities. The bulk of our values are decided for us by those who nurture us into selfhood. For "by the time our reasoning has developed enough to reflect on the process by which our reasoning has formed, we are part and parcel of the whole process, caught up in and sustaining it" (Pearce, 1973, 12, 58).

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Through words, images and other symbols, we play with reality. We present to ourselves and others what is important to us and our feelings about what we believe to be important, and we tend to find those things in our realities. Some languages like those of the Hopi and Eskimo use mainly verb forms for expression and tend to be grounded in the present and in the environment. This is in contrast to English, which is more of a nominal language--focusing on naming and classifying objects. Although our logical and language categories are arbitrary, they are not trivial, for they influence our experiences, either by accident or by design.

All this is illustrated by the fact that we only have a few words for frozen precipitation--hail, snow, sleet, slush. Yet Eskimo people, for whom the quality and nature of snow is vital, have over twenty-two different words for it--each describing precise, and to Eskimos, *important* qualities such as its wetness, size of flakes, thickness of falling, and hardness on the ground.

But if communication processes can lock us in so tightly to a world view, they are also the most powerful means for freeing us to see the world differently. Anthropologist Edward T. Hall believes that, as a species, our greatest gift is to bump up against cultures (i.e., specific views of reality) different from our own and thereby learn about our own cultural habits and be freed of them (1976).

The point of all this is to demonstrate that our models of the world, our communicational realities, and our beliefs about them, help create the reality that we experience.

For example, acting on the certain, known truth that the earth was flat was different after Columbus postulated and then proved its roundness. Then for certain purposes, it became more practical to

believe the earth was round. Yet for building houses, it was still safe to trust in flatness.

And today, most of us think of the world as a solid mass. Yet, for some purposes and to some things, it is but a filmy cloud. Physicists have postulated and now "discovered" Neutrinos -- subatomic particles that come zipping and showering through space and pass through the earth as if it were hardly here at all!

Most scientific paradigms function in this way. Good examples are found in theoretical physics, where notions such as relativity, quarks and black holes were set forth *before* they were "discovered" in the extant universe. LeShan spells out the implications of this:

> If when we learn new things we can see the world differently, then as we learn new things we react to it differently. We are then living in a different world, a world with different possibilities, different impossibilities. Which world is the right one, the real one? Is it the new world or the old?
>
> [Moreover,] what is important about something is also largely our part: of this strange game of give-and-take our consciousness plays with reality How a thing is put together, organized, is our decision, not an implacable part of reality. And we usually interpret this value and organization as existing in the things themselves and act on this interpretation (1976, 10, 13).

Calling the creations of our various communicational realities "multiform reality," Frank Herbert offers this illustration of how our present beliefs filter and shape the reality we experience. He describes the problems science students have in learning to read X-ray plates. Invariably, students "see" things on the plates which those more skilled in reading X-rays say are not there. The students

see what they believe they will see and often become indignant when someone points out that part of what they "see" is not on the plate (1973, 92). Even science--that mythically endowed process which is supposed to arrive at fact and truth--is subject to the process of communicational reality making Like the rest of us, scientists' beliefs shape the "fact" and "reality" they are able to see That is why the history of science, as Thomas Kuhn has beautifully demonstrated, is not a story of the continuous and progressive building up of foundations of facts.

Rather, it is the story of the competition and often political struggle of convincing the believers in established and customary theories that a new theory works and explains. Most often, evidence makes little difference in these struggles. Many of us are familiar with the story of Galileo's persecution by the Pope for putting forward the idea that the earth revolved about the sun, as well as the story about how his colleagues refused to even look through his telescope because such things were--for a fact--not possible.

The mainstream of scientists today are every bit as conservative and clinging to theories as were Galileo's colleagues. There are many examples that could be offered. Our modern medical establishment's cold shoulder approach to both acupuncture and hypnosis as methods of anesthesia, even though they are demonstrably safer and less traumatic for the patient, are but two examples.

We allow ourselves to be debilitated by letting the experts decide, the experts usually being the scientists or social scientists. Those who believe in science have propagated a new myth. It is that scientists know what is important to investigate, that they investigate

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it in an objective, impersonal way, and that they arrive at the truth. This myth tells us that we as "common" people usually (1) do not know what the problems are--we no longer name our own problems--and (2) we do not have the wisdom we need to begin working on our own problems. Instead, we come to increasingly rely on the experts and distrust ourselves. Illich tells us that "this new mythology of governance by the manipulation of knowledge-stock inevitably erodes reliance on government by the people" (1973, 93).

For example, because scientists are scientists, they can only consider certain areas for study; and they must do the studying in the proper scientific way. Other areas simply are not open for investigation. Susanne Langer once facetiously pointed out that the study of miracles would be off limits for scientists because they are most interested in what they can study in their laboratories under so-called rigorous conditions of investigation and what they can subject to repeated experiments in order to verify their findings. Miracles, of course, tend to be somewhat rare occurrences which usually don't happen in the laboratory and are seldom replicable for verification. Emphasis upon scientific methodology and the same results no matter who performs the experiment causes blocking out of other kinds of evidence, such as personal anecdotes and accounts of events. However, the latter are valuable evidence in historical study, in courts of law, and in psychiatric work--especially if there are similar kinds of accounts. Consider the case for the miraculous again. People who are generally the beneficiaries of healing experiences or other dramatic changes in life style have a knowledge gleaned from their experience and they care less about the assertions

of impossibility which come from scientists consulting statistically quantified data labeled "Proof." Some things in life simply cannot be captured through statistical inference. For most people, experience is the test of proof. Allen Wheelis warns against relying on scientists and technocratic experts to tell us the proper ends of human endeavor:"

> All our ends are lodged in faith, science helps with means. All the great and fundamental questions are answered, if at all, only by leap of heart, by deepest feeling, by faith What is important in life? What is worth struggling for, and how much? Should I love my neighbor, concern myself with his suffering? How far does neighborhood extend? To the coast? To North Vietnam? Shall I accept violence and murder as necessary to man's life and arm myself accordingly, or shall I declare them elective and work for their elimination (1971, 108)

It is true that experts may have some insights into an area. However, so many decisions about what to do are ultimately value decisions made after considering the situation. All of us to a lesser or greater degree have the ability to decide and act for ourselves and to form judgments and beliefs about those actions. Our competence in acting and reflecting and developing judgment grows as we exercise it.

Our communicational realities, constituted into beliefs, form a kind of "concentration of energy" which we use either to maintain our views of the world or to change some of those views, and thus change the world we view. And in this process of defining our world, we impose on our selves whatever limitations we accept; therefore, we can also *re*define those limitations and expand our possibilities for being

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From the discussion thus far, one might infer that I am assuming too minimal a role for the world, matter and the environment in the process of communication. Pearce explains it this way: "Nature is something of which I am a part, and which I must represent to myself. But it is also something which I am not. My thinking and that nature thought about create an event, but they are not identical" (1973, 193).

Some Examples for Blowing Open Your Mind

The point is, that for *humans* , our environment does not have a *necessary* relationship with our realities--we can choose, ".. We *represent* the world to ourselves and *respond* to our representations. There is, I would add, a subtle and random way in which 'the world' responds to our representations too" (Pearce, 1973, 2). Let us consider, along with their implications, some powerful examples of "the world" responding to our communicational realities

In trying to think about a spectrum of ways we might create our selves differently from or in addition to the ways we already have and must, it can be provocative to examine and to entertain the validity of some rather unusual and striking phenomena. (By "validity" I mean that something works or is useful for someone's purposes.) When trying to break out of previous ways of thinking about communication processes, a certain "jarring" or "shock" effect is desirable. It is my hope that skeptical readers will be able to get past "it's impossible" or "it's baloney" initial reactions and take a kind of "what if" attitude.

Most of us would agree that different cultures bear and promote different communicational realities. Persons of other

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cultures shape their worlds differently than we do. However, we also might agree that there are certain limitations which universally constrain us as human beings of flesh and blood--falling from a great height kills, water drowns, sharp steel cuts and fire burns. Right? Sometimes--but *not necessarily.*

Certain religious sects in Ceylon, India, Greece and other parts of the world have an annual ceremony in which some or all of their members demonstrate their faith by walking barefooted over beds of hot coals. Skeptics argue that the walkers build up tough calluses on their feet in preparation; however, some of the fire beds have been measured at temperatures hot enough to melt aluminum on contact. Of course, not everyone who attempts to walk the coals succeeds--some persons and their clothes burst into flames and they are killed; others survive but are maimed. On the other hand, those who succeed often wear long robes which brush the coals as the person dances through.

In some areas, certain candidates are chosen by their peers and undergo three months of religious studying, intermittent fasting and other preparations. In other localities the same persons perform the feat year after year, often with their children. Still other fire-walkers undergo no preparation. Pearce tells of laboratory tests in England in 1935 of two "imported" Indian fakirs.

Oxford physicians, chemists, physicists and psychologists prepared and observed the tests. One psychologist, apparently eager to understand yet quite dumbfounded by it all, caught the attention of one of the fakirs. "The fakir, sensing the longing, told the good professor he, too, could walk the fire if he so desired--by holding the fakir's *hand.* The good man was seized with faith that he could,

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shed his shoes, and *hand-in-hand* they walked the fire ecstatic and unharmed" (1973, 111). For more detailed accounts of this phenomenon, see Krechmal (1957), Feinberg (1959), Grosvenor (1966), Kosambi (1967), Pearce (1973, Chapter 6), and LeShan (1976, Chapter 2).

When Thayer poetically says that "For man, communicatively,/ Whatever works is" (1972, 15), there seems to be a lot more possible within that "communicatively" than most of us usually imagine. The phenomenon of fire-walking would seem to blur our normal lines of distinction between what the world can do to us and what we can do in the world

Firewalkers restructure their ordinary interaction with burning coals by embracing--with mind and body--different beliefs about the effects of fire on their flesh, And lo and behold, when feet meet fire, the walkers reform the event through communication--what Pearce calls "an ultimate allegiance of commitment" (1973, 114).

Although he does not use the fire-walking example, Thayer has explained its possibility in terms of our great adaptability which results from our communication abilities:

> ...The comprehending system, as a living system, is *adaptive*. It *will* adapt to those external or internal conditions which it *must* adapt to in some way, or which, in the service of the individual, it would be helpful to adapt to. By-and-large, any normal comprehension/evaluation system could develop almost any set of accommodate-abilities, given appropriate developmental steps and a large enough payoff (either consciously of nonconsciously) for going through the stress which accompanies the instability of that development (1968a, 55).

Thus, we orient ourselves not so much according to what might be objectively "true" for everyone, but according to what we believe will work to help us dance our lives as gracefully, economically, and cleanly as we can, given what we have choreographed for ourselves. If fire-walking is too exotic and foreign for you, there are powerful illustrations of how people can restructure the realities they experience right here in American culture. Consider the woman who is able to lift up the end of a car in order to free her husband pinned beneath it. Or think about the stories of certain Christian religious sects concentrated mostly in the Appalachian region. Members of these sects frequently demonstrate their faith in God and Jesus by publicly handling rattlesnakes which sometimes strike the handler and/or by consuming arsenic in quantities well over "prescribed" lethal dosages. Although not every member of these sects comes through unharmed, by far the majority does. A large part of the key to success in these cases is the person's *acting* as if these feats were possible. By *trying* and believing in one's abilities, odds for success are greatly increased, whereas sticking to the traditional socially impressed beliefs--you are a frail and weak person who cannot possibly lift up the end of a three thousand pound car or survive rattlesnake bites or large doses of arsenic--insures that those attitudes will be fulfilled. The point of all this is to show that even though our ways of perceiving and acting in the world are largely force of habit, we can change those ways by committing ourselves to acting on different beliefs and assumptions. If we don't want to see violence and brutality in the world, then we shouldn't carry weapons or look on others as violence perpetrators. Fear and hatred can be read non-verbally and can easily lead to their

own fulfillment. Likewise, however, looking on people as good and worthwhile most often results in people behaving in ways to merit our beliefs. This may sound hopelessly naive to some readers. Nevertheless, there is a great deal of experience and evidence which supports the idea that our deepest and strongest held beliefs result in their own fulfillment.

Yet we are complex creatures. Often we may think we believe something completely, but we still find ourselves acting contrary to that belief. For instance, we can tell ourselves that we aren't tense and that we won't worry and then still get sick from stress. Changing our conscious and rationally or intellectually held ideas does not necessarily change the beliefs still embraced by our bodies and our non or sub-conscious minds. Our being is more than just our conscious, rational state of awareness. Belief and reality constructs are integrated with the non- or subconscious aspects of our selves as well.

We are creatures of feeling as well as of logical thought, and much of our feeling and thinking occurs below the level of awareness. Thus, when we wish to change, we need to learn how to pay attention to the quiet utterances of those primal levels of thought and feeling and to integrate the fluid image symbols of the non- or subconscious levels with the verbal symbols of logical thought. If we fail to integrate change through all levels of the mind, we will be divided against ourselves and our energies will be scattered. The *alignment* of conscious and non- or subconscious levels allows us to develop greater competencies and skills than we would have if we ignore the thoughts and feelings that flow continuously below the level of awareness. Herbert illustrates the rather paradoxical

interrelations between the conscious and nonconscious aspects of our being when he states that "the virtuosity of our customary speaking response tends to conceal from us how this behavior is dominated by improvisation. This nonawareness carries over into that 'talking' with our universe by which we shape it and are shaped by it" (1973, 100). Philip Slater explains this complexity:

> The mind is a complicated piece of circuitry that connects not real objects, but the representations of those objects and the individual's responses to them. If a person loses a limb, the mental pathways associated with the limb do not immediately disappear--in fact the person for a long time tends to hallucinate the limb as still existing, so powerful are these representations (1974, 117).

Although we "know" intellectually that our foot is no longer with us, our bodies were habituated to its presence and continue to try to function as if it were there. Thus, we find that our belief patterns and communicational realities have been fastened into us as we have grown. Changing them often takes a jolt, a conversion, or a peak experience such as the religious ecstasy of the fire-walker or the life-threatening shock of the car accident. There are a number of therapies, such as rolfing, patterning, bioenergetics, Reichian, autogenic training and Feldenkrais method, which work on changing the body's configurations and releasing set ways of being, thus transforming and opening the mind's perceptions as well. While efforts to transform our ways of perceiving and being can begin with either mind or body work, we in Western culture have overemphasized development of our rational powers to the point where we have nearly forgotten the tremendous richness and

versatility to be found in developing our non-rational, metaphoric, and subconscious selves.

Now, however, many people are beginning to help us realize these abilities which artists and other creative persons have known how to tap for ages. For readers interested in further exploring this area, I would recommend these excellent treatments of it: *Changing Images of Man* (Markley, 1974), *The Metaphoric Mind* (Samples, 1976), *Magical Child* (Pearce, 1977), and "The Psychenaut Program: An Exploration into Some Human Potentials" (Houston, 1973).

Perhaps some readers feel that I am asserting too great a role for communication and choice based on a few weird and far too deviant cases. Yet, as Kuhn has pointed out, most scientific discoveries are made by those scientists who pursue the "mistake," the fluke, the "spurious" finding. Rather than throwing out the data which doesn't fit their bell-curves or their explanations, as so many social scientists do regularly, they shift their energies into a passionate search to understand.

Similarly, I believe that these, to us non-ordinary, examples indicate powers and potentials which a great many of us might be able to learn from and use. Fear of exploring them may testify less to their existence than to the desire to maintain our belief systems like security blankets and ignore anything which might threaten those beliefs.

In any case, it takes more than the challenging of a few of our assumptions to spur a reformulation of accepted communicational realities. So let's look briefly at a few more examples that provide something for our minds to chew on.

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Fire-walking grows somewhat more "possible" if we think seriously about the related occurrences of psychosomatic illness, biofeedback control, and "psychic" healing or, to coin a phrase, psychosomatic health.

The relationship between illness and our communicational processes for dealing with our environments--particularly stress--has been well established. For example, Stanley Cobb points out that "among the various factors that precipitate a disorder of function in man,... symbolic stimuli must be considered as probably usually present and often important. Words uttered or written by other persons, or even gestures, may start a train of physiologic events that leads to tissue damage" (in McCorkle, 1973, 3). To illustrate this, most of us have at some time or another had the experience of catching the tension of someone else who is visibly upset, nervous or angry. We are also finding that, when people experience intense feelings of helplessness or hopelessness, they are setting the stage for illness. Such feelings among orphans and elderly persons who experience the loss or absence of loving and caring relations can lead to otherwise inexplicable death--simply from loss of the *will* or *desire* to live and not from any "organic" causes.

If we accept the notion that "stress," for example, can cause ulcers, it is certainly not so unreasonable that other communicational activities might create health--and possibly even protection of a person's tissues from damage from fire.

Psychologist Lawrence LeShan worked on a project for twelve years studying psychosomatic illness. In the course of the study, he became interested in so-called "psychic" and "paranormal" phenomena. Investigating psychic healing, he found a solid

"residue" of experimental work and evaluations of reported claims--after discarding "the 95 percent of the claims that could have been due to hysterical change, suggestion, bad experimental design, poor memory, and plain chicanery" (1974, 102).

From studying and working with numerous psychic healers, LeShan was able to teach himself healing skills. Later, after practicing and experimenting with his skills, he also had success at training physicians and psychologists in their use. Of course, the healer is not successful every time, but neither is penicillin. (See LeShan, 1974, Chapter 7, for more detail.)

LeShan notes that, although it is not necessary that the healee express belief in the possibilities of being healed in this way, it is necessary that the person *want* to get well. He believes that we do almost everything below our potential. We don't read as fast, jump as high, see colors as well as we might. The same is true for self healing (LeShan, 1974, 110). We do heal ourselves all the time; the potential is ours. But we seldom do it as well as we can. Examples of healing cited by LeShan may be examples of our innate healing experience operating closer to its full potential.

Thayer notes that most models of humans and of communication fail to "take account of the *self-organizing* aspect of the organism" (1970, 6). This self-organizing quality often takes place at a level which supersedes that of our normal, rational consciousness. From the example of psychosomatic illness, it would seem that self-organizing can occur for the immediate benefit of the whole organism but to the detriment of one of its parts--and sometimes, in the long run, to the detriment of the whole. That is, the whole person/organism handles tension or stress by resolving it

for the whole by tightening intestinal muscles or by stimulating the stomach's acid production or by tightening the muscles banding the eyes and thereby causing chronic symptoms. Thus, self-organizing--the integration of the mind/organism system--would seem to play a key role in the organism's acting on and/or coping with its environment. This coping can be pathological (i.e., result in physical or psychological disease), or it can be for health.

This may help us toward an understanding of "psychic" healing. For it is possible that psychic healing involves a kind of communication between the healer and the healee at a "transcendent" level of some sort. This level could be one at which the self-organizing functions of the two organisms somehow "free" each other from the usual purposive (and cross-purposive) controls at play within the organism.

Perhaps psychic healing involves some communicative "appetite" at the organism level which has been constrained or dominated by the conscious or ordinary functioning levels of a person. As in psychosomatic symptoms, we may not be aware that we are consciously short-circuiting our autonomic or organismic control system(s).

This possible explanation of psychic healing is supported by the phenomenon of biofeedback control in which, through conscious thought process, one can achieve voluntary control over previously involuntary bodily operations. The principle is that our thinking can intervene and control processes usually controlled "independently" or nonconsciously by the autonomic nervous system or limbic brain. Persons experimenting with biofeedback devices which either visually or aurally indicate changes in the organ

or function being worked with have been able to learn to control heart-rate, blood flow to specific areas of the body, muscle activity, cardiac arhythmias, angina pectoris, migraine and tension headaches, impotence, and epileptic seizures. One laboratory biofeedback volunteer exclaimed: "It's as if your body has always been on automatic pilot, and suddenly you find you can take over the controls" (1973, 32). Psychic healing could be something akin to biofeedback but without the machinery.

Perhaps if we learn to believe more in our selves and less in the medical priests, we might someday learn enough in grade school to be our own best doctors.

Let me offer one other set of examples which illustrates how we can tap into and use our powers of organizing and reorganizing our realities through our subjective believings. Jean Houston and Robert Masters established the Foundation for Mind Research in order to experiment with and study persons' subjective (communicational) realities and their unused potentials (1972; Masters, 1974; Houston, 1973, 1974). Some of their experiments concern a phenomenon, called accelerated mental process (AMP), which has tremendous implications for learning and education (as well as horrific implications for dehumanizing control).

For example, an art student was placed in a trance and told by her guide that in the next three minutes of clock time she would imagine herself--would *experience* "mentally" but with her senses--working with a famous artist for an hour a day for nine months. She was told that her drawing skills would improve considerably from this studying. Upon coming out of the trance, the woman rushed home to work on an idea for a drawing conceived during her AMP

experience. She worked continuously on it for thirty-six hours, and then went to sleep exhausted. When she showed it to her teachers, they could not believe it was her work because her style had changed and matured so radically. Many months after the experiment, the woman was still energized from her AMP experience.

During their AMP experiences, other persons worked out resolutions to plots of novels, practiced the piano, and composed songs which were remembered and were as saleable as their ordinary work efforts. It takes little imagination to think of the kinds of creative potentials that children and adults alike might develop in this way.

These kinds of experiences need not be imbued with magical or mysterious properties--although many of us might consider them sacred. Rather, they are creative processes arising from the interplay of our communicational realities. These examples demonstrate that "perceiving reality in different--although equally valid--ways produces different possibilities of interaction with it" (LeShan, 1969, 42).

Although much of our feeling and thinking may go on below the level of awareness, the above examples illustrate that a person can become aware and intervene in many of the processes of this flow of determined behavior. While past experiences form a pattern that determines our future ways of behaving, we can change by not only becoming aware, but by following awareness with effort and will (see Wheelis, 1973). Changing also requires attempting to integrate layers of conscious and non- or subconscious thought and action.

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These illustrations are presented to convince the reader that the potential for changing the ways we might think of ourselves, our institutions, our societies, and of the communication processes which generate and regenerate them all comes through communicating--through thinking, imagining, and acting. As Thayer puts it, whatever it is we do as humans "can be carried out only in and through communication and intercommunication" (1968b, 56).

The Challenge and the Promise--From Being Named to Naming

We return again to the notion of belief. We assume certain constructs which enable us to challenge and reformulate others. In clothing ourselves with our assumptions, we take on an air of certainty, as if these assumptions ceased being things we hold and act on in faith and become absolute truths. Moving from the tentativeness of assumptions to the certainty of truth does have advantages. It provides us a strong and binding focus which supports us in our forays into the unknown. Feeling like we have the truth sustains us. It may also make us complacent, causing us to critically challenge the beliefs and realities of those who differ from us but to uncritically accept our own beliefs and the realities springing from them.

It is symbolic processes that make possible the construction of what is, to a large extent, communicational realities. This ability is the evolutionary leap of being that has resulted in human existence as we know it. Slater designates symbolization as the process that gives us not only the capacity to create realities but to ignore information from our environments and ourselves in favor of our

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symbolized realities (Slater, 1974, 59). For example, symbolization makes possible the belief system which allows firewalkers to tread smoldering coals without being burned. It helps them transcend their environment.

However, symbolization also permits those in power to persuade the powerless to ignore their own experience and knowledge. Take the young child playing outside in the cold without layers of protective clothing. Imagine an exchange between mother (empowered) and child (powerless):

"Put on your coat'"
"But I'm not cold."
"Of course you are. It's cold out there. I'm telling you to put your coat on or you'll catch cold. I know what's good for you."
"But I'm not cold."

People in different cultures experience cold in different ways. And within culture, people experience cold differently depending on their metabolic systems. The above example is a common instance of the way people with power may try to impose their beliefs and experiences on the powerless, oftentimes forcing the powerless to deny their own sensory or experiential knowledge. This is the danger of symbolization--the schizoid tendency Slater refers to that can cause us to be separated from ourselves and our environments. Symbols allow us to use authority to override intrinsic values; and when we begin to ignore our own experience and knowledge in favor of dictates of cultural patterns and authority figures, we begin to be in exile from ourselves and our environments. Yet Slater sees hope:

> The fact that so many new and contrasting strains are now being fed into our culture is a sign both of its illness and its vitality, just as high blood count shows both that an organism is sick and that it is resp[illegible]ng vigorously. Rome, during its long decline, exhibited the same eager appetite for alien and deviant traditions, and although it never corrected its self-destructive commitment to massive inequality of wealth and other addictions, this receptivity certainly prolonged its existence. The same phenomenon is visible now... (1974, 190, 178).

But because we are repeating this pattern does not mean we are fated to decline like our Roman predecessors. We are at a turning point. We control our fate--by default or by design. If we choose, we can transform our selves and our cultural patterns in ways that will enable us to *transcend* them, rather than riding them to their logical or illogical conclusions. The conceptual images and their ways of being manifested which I have presented in the first two parts of this study have been my attempt to explore those aspects of people and their communicational realities which determine, control and limit us and those which free, modify and extend us--in what we do and in what we think we can do. It is my hope and my belief that these efforts can lead to many ideas and actions for re-creating old and creating new social, institutional and societal relationships which will help me and others to sense, develop and extend our "organic interconnectedness" as Slater calls it. Each of us is now faced with the challenge and the promise of becoming more involved in the choices that shape the character and directions of our lives. Certainly, the confusion and hired opinions of scientists, doctors and other "experts" have by now demonstrated that we should not feel safe in leaving our choices entirely up to them. Allen Wheelis outlines our dilemma this way:

> Man does not now--and will not ever--live by the bread of scientific method alone. He must deal with life and death, with love and cruelty and despair, and so must make conjectures of great importance which may or may not be true and which do not lend themselves to experimentation: It is better to give than to receive; Love thy neighbor as thyself; Better to risk slavery through non-violence than to defend freedom with murder. We must deal with such propositions, must decide whether they are true, whether to believe them, whether to act on them--and scientific method is no help, for by their nature these matters lie forever beyond the realm of science (1971, 89, 90).

Scientists and other knowledge brokers do not shape the realities we experience concerning these matters. Rather, it is how each "ordinary" unique person acts on them that counts. We hold the cards and make the choices--even when we choose to let someone else play our cards for us.

I have often thought that, given the somewhat chaotic--and often atheoretical, and therefore "amoral,"--state of our "knowledge" of humans and their social relationings, we might be better off writing poetry and then basing our social policies and institutions on that.

Through this study, I have come to the conclusion that each person's experience forms a kind of poetry--sometimes tragic, sometimes comic, but always important and expressive of the kinds of society which nurtures its authors. Is that society crippling or nurturing, and for whom? That is the question we must ask as we read and share each other's poetry.

Although "we are," as Thayer puts it, "the communication experiences we have had, and we can be what our communicational

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ecologies *permit* or *force* us to be," we can be more (1968b, 67). We can be what we can imagine, and imagination is the magic synthesis which extends beyond past experience. The image is what guides us--individually and collectively. It is our touchstone.

The story is told about Einstein, who first glimpsed his theory of relativity via visual and kinesthetic imagery. He practiced recalling the imaging until he could summon it at will. Then, holding fast to the imaging, he undertook the years of arduous struggle to transform what he knew into a mathematical formula that could be shared with colleagues.

Thus, perhaps not all of my words about self-actualizing persons and more open communities of relationship are pure idealism or sheer utopian impracticality. For if we are what we do, and if what we do comes from what we think, then perhaps a little "impractical"--but diverse--imaging might help us create some working alternatives to the society we each experience, as Einstein's imaging flowered into divergent but working alternatives to previous scientific beliefs.

But too often, it seems, the what we value of what we do is nonconscious, implicit and, thus, shaping our doing more than we realize. Yet there are always values in how we organize things. When our organizing is "atheoretical" (which is impossible), the values are nonconscious or implicit. In so much social "science" work, the implied theory seems to be: more data is better. But "Better for whom and for what ends?" are seldom asked questions.

When we leave the what we value of what we do to the nonconscious

realm, we give up a degree of choice, a measure of personal freedom. In essence, we close down our selves and our possibilities for being by default. The way that so many persons have been defaulting and allowing "experts," social mores, and the proverbial "jones" to influence and control what they do, it is little wonder that Skinnerian and behavioristic means of manipulating people have become so popular.

For example, Skinner wants to develop a science of human behavior based on the "relation between behavior and the environment and neglecting states of mind." Further, he claims that behavioral "technology has been most successful when we can specify behavior and can arrange appropriate contingencies fairly easily--for example, in child-care, schools, and the management of retardates and institutionalized psychotics....What we need is more control, not less, and this is itself an engineering problem of the first importance." Skinner always refers to this mysterious third or plural party--the controller(s)--who remains undefined and undescribed. It is interesting to read Skinner and stop at every "we" and ask "we who" and "for what purpose?" (see Skinner, 1972).

In considering the relations among environments and personal growth, it may appear that I am after goals similar to Skinner's. But the crucial difference for me is in the locus of control. In no way do I wish for these notions about more open social systems to become "contingencies" to be forced on or to manipulate others. The choice must come from within each individual person who seeks to improve and enrich his or her life through creating more open relationships (systems) with others.

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Carl Rogers' observation about therapy and groups is applicable to people's using (or not) the images 194

I have begun to sketch in this study: "I see constructive outcomes...as possible only in terms of the human individual who has come to trust her own inner directions, and whose awareness is a part of and integrated with the process nature of her organic functioning" (1977, 248).

I am *not* trying to argue or proselytize for *the* "right" way. For there are any number of ways which are right for the person who takes and creates them. What I am urging here, however, is that each of us consider the ways that we are taking and, if we are not satisfied and fulfilled by them, that we take steps to change those ways. And what I am suggesting is that one means of changing is to develop and embrace and begin to act from new images of what is possible, of what we want, or what we feel is proper and right for us each--not for everyone.

Pearce reminds us that we can create from "an open-ended possibility, provided we can open to other world views...as valid, rather than as objects for destruction that our own might reign Supreme" (1973, 61). For example, I do not *necessarily* want to "destroy" traditional schooling or the materialistic and profit-motivated world view. I just want them to stifle a little less, to move over and make some "symbiotic room" for the others of us who are trying to live tuned to a different value rhythm. Because I like channel BIO doesn't mean that I think channels BFS, GOD, MRX, $$$, or AIR and their audiences should be oppressed or eliminated. Because our cultural heritage has brought some good to some people (while holding out the promise for all), does not mean that we must

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keep faith and try to perfect our already good--for some--thing. Our society is large and complex enough that it can withstand the diversity of forms and of relations which we already see arising within it--from communes to monasteries, from palmists to priests, from surgeons to faith healers and so on.

For as Thayer states, "There is no more absolute good or right implicit in man's sophisticated intercommunication-abilities than in the apparent muteness of butterflies. The sole criterion lies in the consequences of the ways in which those capacities are deployed" (1968, 55).

And yet there lies in our nature a basic paradox. It is that, in order to exist in this earthly realm, we must ignore some possibilities and concentrate on others. We cannot pursue all possibilities at once. And there is a limit to how many we can partially consider and thereby partially invest in our selves before being deemed "insane." To even toy with other, perhaps contradicting, possibilities, we must hold some firm. The more we have a clearly detailed image of "who we are" and thus gain faith in our selves, the more secure, and thereby free, we are to look at others' images. And the more we know about ourselves, about our complexity, the more open we are--i.e., the more able we are, upon discovery of some notion or action that seems aesthetically pleasing, to trade a small or large part of what we are for what we might want to become.

On the other hand, the person whose faith is all in one simple, unelaborated concept of self--be it God, science or patriotism--cannot afford to look around (other than to defend the

faith), for he or she would risk too much of their total identity in any trade for different possibility.

These notions, it seems to me, are the best possible argument for creating social systems with enough openness (and room for "error") that we learn to know our selves--our implicit ethics and values--so that we might find out if we like what we come to know. Thereby we would open our selves consciously to making aesthetic and ethical choice for what we become. Knowing our values, we can then learn to inquire of our selves and make explicit our commitments.

Frank Herbert speaks to the social value of this kind of self-awareness metaphorically:

> It dismays some people to think that we are in some kind of a jam session with our universe and that our survival demands an ever-increasing virtuosity, an ever-improving mastery of our instruments. Whatever we may retain of logic and reason, however, points in that direction. It indicates that the creation of human societies probably should become more of an art form than a plaything of science (1973, 100).

What so many of us seem to have done is abdicated our abilities to make ethical and aesthetic choices for nurturing each other in favor of those easy, prepackaged choices that gratify our senses without threatening our placidness or risking our emotional involvement and commitment. But in accepting prepackaged choices, we lose the joy of doing our own creating and the sense of vitality and power that comes with our own acting.

This is an echo of Paolo Freire's ideas about the importance of dialogue for our lives. He states that

> human existence cannot be silent...to exist, humanly, is to *name* the world, to change it. Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new *naming*" (1970, 75).

Gardner Murphy offers this summary of how we create our selves through our images and our communicational realities:

> As man makes new images of himself, he indulges in self-fulfilling prophecies. He has always made himself into what he imagined himself to be. Fortunately, there were some natural obstacles encountered in this process; for he never made himself either as stupid or as cruel as much of our folklore and history has declared him to be. Still, he has been archconstructor of fantasies about himself, which made him feel good, wise, powerful, a little lower than the angels, and in the long, long-run this capacity to keep on striving for something has helped him in inching his way up the long trail (1968, 12),

We shape our worlds--name them--symbolically represent them. Therein lies a godlike power. For once we have named and shaped our worlds via language and art, our creations stand almost independently for a while and interact with us. Through the interaction comes growth and change, which causes us again to rename and reshape our worlds until they envelop us yet once more as new creations. The helix builds--naming, interacting, new experiences, renaming, interacting, new experiences,,,.

If some of the ideas and ways of being which I have described in previous chapters appeal to readers, I would urge you to begin the kind of dialogue of naming and renaming your worlds which I describe. This kind of dialogue begins with your self--by getting in touch with who you are and who you want to be--and then extends to those with whom you love and work and play, those with

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whom you share your life. As your dialogue continues, it will grow from words to work, to action and reflection. For growing and dialoguing is a continuing process. It is the process of gaining personal power and worth, of becoming who you can become again and again as you see new possibilities for being.

The poet-philosopher Goethe wrote centuries ago that "whatever is fact was first in theory" (in LeShan, 1976, 19). If you are desirous of making some of the "theory" presented herein a "fact" of your own life, I would urge you to consider what you might dare to become and to then act on your considerings. The next chapter is designed to be of help to you on your personal way toward actualizing both your self and the creation of a community of fulfilling human relatedness.

Robert Skenes teaches future teachers at the National College of Education at its North Virginia Center in McLean, Virginia. It is very comforting to remember that such an insightful, highly gifted, well-informed and thoughtful teacher as Robert is in a position to influence and teach students who may become future teachers!

REVIEWS:

("God works in mysterious ways, his wonders to perform" Department)

Nectar at Noon, *Sheila Cudahy '42, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989.* This is poet and novelist Sheila Cudahy's first collection of short stories. Her characters, enmeshed in baffling circumstances—broken marriages, rivalries, grievings, jealousies—grope their way; with her poet's gift for language, she illuminates their struggle for us as lightning illuminates—with a brilliant image. There is mystery and parable in these tales of a young girl insistent on growing a golden beard, a skywriter writing his lost love's name in the sky, a teacher revealing the universe to her fourth-grade class with the imprint of her finger on the blackboard.

"Who remembers what we learned yesterday?" No one remembers. They are adrift, beyond reach. "Sets, class, we learned about sets of numbers." They stare with the empty eyes of the drowned. I struggle to revive them. "Number, children, the beauty of number." Turning my back on them, I draw a huge circle on the blackboard. The chalk squeaks horribly. "Oweee," I hear Crissie squeal as I continue: "Here is the universe and everything in it, everything and everyone you can think of. Use your imagination. It's like a bird caged in your head. Let it fly and carry you." All is quiet behind me. I add tiny circles within the hole. "Here is Mary and John and Sara." I write names next to each circle, including those of the absent.

A stir of bodies fills the room, and glancing over my shoulder I see rows of faces uplifted and floating toward me. Elated, I grab a piece of yellow chalk and sketch stars, comets, nebulae. "Each one of us has a secret number, and like the heavenly bodies we spin around a motionless center." I place a wet forefinger in the middle of the circle. The spot quickly dries to a faint smudge. "You can't see this point with your eyes. It's too bright, the most brilliant number of all, but you can see it with your minds, and sometimes, you can hear the music of the stars as they whirl and play." ...I turn to the class. The room is empty. The recess bell fades in the din of feet scuffling in the corridor.

From "Illuminations," Nectar at Noon

from the BRYN MAWR ALUMNAE BULLETIN
• SPRING 1990 •

CHILD'S WORK: TAKING CHILDREN'S CHOICES SERIOUSLY
Reviewed by Nancy Mittleman

Nancy Wallace's book, *Child's Work: Taking Children's Choices Seriously*, is a real pleasure to read; it is a well-written, absorbing personal account of Nancy's and her children's experiences as together they undertook the challenge of home-schooling. Nancy has the courage and sensitivity to listen to her children, Vita and Ishmael, and to allow them to explore and find the ways in which they feel they are able to learn. We see them successfully become skilled at music, math, art, and reading and writing.

As I was reading about the experiences of these impressive children, I wondered how much was the effect of God-given talent and how much was because Nancy and her husband really struggled with letting the children do their learning in their own way, often, as parents, feeling much doubt and fear about whether they were doing "the right thing for the children." We find that Nancy learned a great deal from her children in learning to trust her own instincts as Vita and Ishmael were following theirs. If we could only all learn to listen to the children who are under our care, allowing them to find what excites them in life and giving them permission to explore that excitement, what a different culture we might live in!

As I was reading this book, I reflected on my own rigid schooling experience, the schooling which has had a great deal to do with squelching my own creativity. I have been noticing how that experience contaminates my own being with children, either my own or those under my care in The Free School where I teach. At

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times at school I have found myself interrupting my kindergarteners play to have an "organized activity" because I felt I should be "teaching" them something, after all, even in an alternative school, that is my job. (or so I tend to think at times) Actually I don't believe that there is intrinsically anything wrong with an "organized activity" - the important thing is to remember the dance. Nancy Wallace's book provided me with another tool to remember that teaching is a dance, and that children are the choreographers.

One of my favorite examples of Nancy allowing her children to do the choreography of their own learning dance is the one of Vita refusing to spell a word the same way more than once as she was writing her many stories and plays. Of course, as Vita was to discover for herself, this oftentimes made her writings unreadable to others. And since having her writings understood by others was very important to her, Vita decided that spelling words as they are presented by Webster made a great deal of sense. She did not make this decision because the adults around her were telling her it was wrong, but because it made sense to her and was important to her! And my life experiences have taught me that self-motivation is the only thing that works in learning anything in life.

The one difficulty I had while reading this book was the sections which focused on Vita's and, more specifically, Ishmael's learning in the field of music. Both children are very talented as musicians and Ishmael began to compose at an early age. I found Nancy's ability to listen to her children's decisions about how they wanted to learn music as impressive as her willingness to allow them choices in other areas of learning; however, I got bogged down in the long explicatives using music terms which, as a non-

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music-minded person, left me not knowing what she was talking about. I imagine someone interested in music composition would find these parts of the book very enlightening, though.

In answer to my own question above, it is probably so that Ishmael and Vita are very talented people to begin with and the ways in which Nancy and her husband were able to support their children simply allowed these talents to blossom to their fullest. But even so, I know that the innate message that comes forth in *Child's Work* is a good one and one which I will continue to reflect upon. May we all allow the children of our families, nuclear and extended, to have choices and then to take their choices seriously.

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LETTERS:

AKWESASNE FREEDOM SCHOOL
MOHAWK NATION
BOX 290
ROOSEVELTOWN, N.Y. 13683
TEL. 518-358-2073

November 18, 1990

Dear Friend,

The past two years have been a time of crisis for the Mohawk people. Last spring, Akwesasne deteriorated into a virtual state of civil war, resulting in the deaths of two young men. Many of you have read of the violence at Akwesasne. Some coverage was inaccurate - some too shallow. What remains are misconceptions and bad impressions.

We, the Mohawk people, continue our struggle to maintain a world close to the Creator. The Mohawks of Akwesasne are dealing with such diverse problems as toxic waste and pollution, unemployment, illegal casinos, smuggling, drug abuse, armed warriors who answer to no one, and the loss of land, language and culture. The community of Akwesasne, known world-wide for its achievements, has been torn apart.

Our greatest challenge is ahead of us. How will the outside world treat our children as they grow into adults? How will our children find the inner strength to be fine Mohawk people?

The Akwesasne Freedom School remains a constant and stable force in the community. The curriculum, steeped in traditional

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Mohawk culture, promotes peaceful co-existence with our environment and with other Teachers share the classrooms with the Elders, Faithkeepers and artists of Akwesasne. Children gain a strong identity and positive self-image. The hope of Akwesasne lies with the Freedom School. By helping the Freedom School you help the children, and the future of the Mohawk Nation. Its is imperative that the school continue.

Throughout ten years of operation the school has survived and expanded, despite challenges, one of the most critical when PCB's were found in the water and plant life of the current school Yet we have good news. Enrollment has soared to twenty-five students from an all-time low of five during the crisis and we will open a new school away from the General Foundries Superfund Site. The new school's foundation and framing are complete on its new location just off the reservation, free from toxic waste and casino gambling. Yet no funds remain for the building.

Your tax-deductible contribution to the school will insure the building's completion. Just fill out the form in the enclosed brochure and mail it with your contribution today. *Niawenko:wa* ! (Thank you very much).

In Peace,
Marjorie Skidder,
Director

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Dear Mary,

The summer issue of ΣΚΟΛΕ is yet another wonder for me. I found almost every article relevant and helpful. There is much to learn within this literary journal. I'm glad to see varying viewpoints represented.

I noticed that ΣΚΟΛΕ is very much pointed toward an "in" crowd. This is appropriate for now, seeing as "we" are the only ones buying ΣΚΟΛΕ, but if ΣΚΟΛΕ is to gain the larger audience that it certainly deserves, I think the "in crowd" comments will have to be aired in private. That's for later. For now, I really respect your honesty. Honesty is sometimes difficult, but it is the only way to really cut through the bull.

ΣΚΟΛΕ 's ruthless pertinence is refreshing, to say the least. Definitely something worth reading and keeping. Keep up the good work!

Love,
Josh

P.S. I have only recently heard bits of information about the dirt with ΣΚΟΛΕ and the NCACS Board. I don't understand the ins and outs of this particular situation. I wish that there were some way that we could work things out (I'm speaking generally) during the year. It seems that things always build up and get dumped on the conferences. This is **not** a prediction, though. I hope you are feeling OK...as a person, not as a member of the NCACS. That's secondary. I hope to see you at the conference and maybe I'll get to come visit there sometime. Give everybody a hug for me!

P.P.S. Feel free to use any of the essays enclosed in ΣΚΟΛΕ or give me feedback.

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March 29, 1991

Dear Mary:

Thanks for sending me the Winter, 1991 issue of ΣΚΟΛΕ. It so happens that I have already taken advantage of Jerry Mintz's reduced subscription rates to subscribe for a year.

You ask for contributions, and I always have some stray ideas that I don't know where to put, so maybe this is a good match.

There are several trends in thinking among my peers today that I feel need more counterpoint. All perhaps reflect in some way the needless tension that is building between spiritual and political approaches to solving the world's problems.

The first regards self-esteem. I believe this word has acquired a dangerously high level of uncritical acclaim. In the first place, the concept makes assumptions about the nature of the mind which are rarely understood, let alone questioned. Let us take as a working definition of the term the one given by Charles Wieder in the Winter 1991 issue of ΣΚΟΛΕ (p. 94), which I think is fairly representative of what the term means to people. His definition of self-esteem is "the conviction that one's own mind is adequate for the grasping, integrating, evaluating, and applying one's knowledge of the world." The problems with this definition are many, but I wish here to focus on the word "conviction" (the same objections would apply to any replacement).

Underlying this word is the notion that such opinions are essentially static. Of course, self-esteem can change over time, just as natural hair color can, but the implication is that it has a particular quality at any particular time. In fact, most people have a wide range of thoughts about their own abilities to manage in the world, from

absurd underestimates to grandiose overestimates. Thus a more accurate image of self-esteem would be a sort of weighted average, or perhaps a predominant thought pattern. By asking people how their self-esteem is, or by labeling it low or high, we are reinforcing only one part of their thinking. To induce children into evaluating their self-esteem as if it were a mathematical variable that could easily be rated on a scale of 1 to 10 (or a choice of "low" or "high") has the same risks as labels of "learning disabled," or even "stupid." A bigger objection to the glib use of this subtle concept is that the nature of the problem and its possible solutions remain hidden. By seeing self-esteem as a linear variable ranging from low to high, we decide inevitably that self-esteem of children (and adults) must be raised, and that we must shoot for the highest possible. I wish to differ with this view.

The locus of the problem is in the thought pattern of the individual; some of his or her thoughts place a negative worth on his or her own being, an obviously undesirable situation. To shift these thoughts to ones of positive self-worth, while an improvement, is fraught with its own risks of expectation and disappointment, insensitivity to others, and just plain self-absorption. What purpose is served by attaching a value to our own being? We exist, and if we understand ourselves to be embedded in a universal matrix of love, the whole question of value becomes meaningless. Our lives are joyful and loving because that is our nature, and self-evaluation of any kind will interfere.

The other points I wish to make are more directly concerned with politics and spirituality. While I have not yet heard the pundits put a label on the 90's, as they have on previous decades, I am

afraid that it is becoming the decade of taking offense. While political thought has always been dominated by separation into categories of right and wrong, it is now fashionable to take offense at remarks because of very subtle innuendoes in speech, so subtle that they often are not intended by the speakers.

No matter whether they are or are not intended. From a spiritual viewpoint, all people are our brothers and sisters. If someone's statements seem to us to reflect errors in thought, by all means let us not take on those errors. By all means let us educate the speaker as to where her thinking may be misguided. But let us not withdraw our love for others because of their mistakes. And taking offense is withdrawing love. As educators in particular, this is surely a lesson we have learned. We would not take offense because a student did not know the capital of New York State (even if we happened to live there).

As I stated briefly in my opinion piece in the Spring 1991 issue of HER [*Holistic Education Review,* ed.], I believe spirituality and politics go together; properly understood, they are of a piece, inseparable. My understanding of politics, however, is action taken in the world to change the conditions of life for people on Earth. No adversarial perspective is assumed. If politics means finding our enemy and opposing him, count me out!

This would have exhausted my mind's overflow but for the perfect example given by the letter from Jonathan Kozol in the Winter issue of ΣΚΟΛΕ. I admire Kozol's dedication and insight, and indeed have referred to his work in my own upcoming book, *What's Possible in Education.* I also divine, from his writings, that

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his is a very political perspective, political in the sense of identifying people as right-minded or wrong-minded.

Of course, sometimes it is hard to avoid addressing an issue in these terms, when staunch supporters of irreconcilable points of view line up against each other. But the view taken by Kozol, one frequently taken by political activists, seeks out this situation as a heat-seeking missile seeks heat.

More than half of Kozol's very strong anti-choice letter is merely a recital of all the people whose support for it should make it suspect. I'm sure my knowledge of the ins and outs of school choice is less than Kozol's, and one-sided at that, since the materials I have seen are largely pro-choice. Still, these materials do not ignore his objections. The East Harlem choice system has surely benefited the most in need of New York's inner city poor, unless all the literature on it is totally deceitful. The newer scheme in Richmond, California (which has a high population of poor and minorities), though troubled financially and in other ways, has given careful attention to insuring that *all* its schools have a consistent, caring philosophy and reasonable resources. Transportation expenses and parental outreach are very explicitly considered as an issue in the materials I've seen, and since a major motivation for choice is more effective desegregation, it seems to me politically impossible that it could end up isolating the poor, or at least the racial minorities that constitute the bulk of the poor.

At the very least, Kozol's passing references to the real problems that school choice must resolve as if they were intractable issues that choice proponents wish to obscure is misleadingly onesided.

I am not so politically naive as to ignore the fact that Bush, Friedman, and the Heritage Institute support choice, but just as the notion that people with low self-esteem are monolithically negative in their thinking about themselves is erroneous, so is the idea that people on the right only support programs that help corporations and the military while being insensitive to the needs of the poor and minorities. If it is difficult to find issues on which we can join forces with those in power, this may enhance our righteous position as victims of a heartless order but certainly makes it harder to accomplish things. When we can find an issue on which right and left wing (if we must think in those terms) may find some common ground, let us embrace that possibility rather than discard it. Sure, we'll have to do some fancy footwork and keep our eyes wide open to be sure that the final result is consistent with our vision and not a hypocritical program that professes one set of values while upholding the opposite. But if we have the strength to fight entrenched money and power, surely we have the strength to cooperate with it in a way that truly promotes our values.

Thank you for listening and publishing,

Ken Lebensold
7575 Sunkist Drive
Oakland, CA 94605

May 25, 1991

Dear Mary,

I am enclosing a blurb for the next issue of ΣΚΟΛΕ as you suggested to Jane Williams. She passed the responsibility on to me to make sure you get it on time because she had other commitments and couldn't get to it. I hope I have made the deadline.

She didn't say anything about length so if you find this to be too long, feel free to edit it to the bare essentials to fit the space available.

Thank you for the invitation to include this request for assistance.

Warmly,
Kay Lynne Peterson

There is a group of parents in Sacramento, California making plans to begin a school based on the principles of freedom for the student to initiate and pursue his own course of study. The model closest to what we envision, that we are aware of at this time, is the Sudbury Valley School in Framingham, Massachusetts.

There are a few alterations we'd like to make to that model, but at this point in time we are searching for any available help in putting together a working plan to pursue the goal of getting a school established. We will be searching for staff members, but would also like to correspond or talk to anyone who has been associated with founding and organizing or being involved on a day-to-day basis with such a school.

We are especially interested in finding anyone who might have experience in applying common law principles to the internal disciplinary structure of a school or any voluntary association.

Interested persons may respond to: Educational Spectrums, c/o Jane Williams, P.O. Box 1014, Placerville, CA 95667.

Thank you for any help and assistance forthcoming.

Kaye Lynn Peterson
4628 Plantation Drive
Fair Oaks, CA 95628

Dear Mary:

I am responding to the letter and questionnaire you sent out regarding the interest in the continuation of ΣΚΟΛΕ,. I always need more space to respond than one finds on the average questionnaire so I hope you won't mind if I combine my answers to the questionnaire with my letter...

I decided to resubscribe because I was so taken by the first copy of ΣΚΟΛΕ I read (which I received as a complimentary copy from Michael Traugot). I was thrilled to read about the wonderful alternative schools that were featured and was impressed by the knowledge and dedication of the people writing the articles.

I like to following things about the journal: the sharing of different ways alternative education is being carried out around the country; the encouragement I get from reading about other people's experience; the quality of the articles.

I am not so happy about the lack of a predictable publishing date and the fact that I'm not really sure how many issues my yearly subscription entitles me to. For example, to the best of my knowledge (and memory), I have received only two copies of ΣΚΟΛΕ, one was the complementary copy, and now you are saying my subscription has run out. It seems to be a little on the expensive side to pay $15 (now $20) for one issue of the magazine. I think if one of your goals is to have schools and libraries subscribe to ΣΚΟΛΕ, it is going to be especially important to have a set number of issues per year that come out at predictable intervals.

I would like to see articles both along the same vein we have seen, alternative schools telling about what they do, and about ways that we can spread the word about alternative education to a wider population so that more children can have the opportunity to experience alternative education, and how we can build a stronger alternative education community.

I will be happy to help by writing articles about my involvement in alternative education which is not vast but is heartfelt. I would also be willing to interview folks who don't care to write articles or don't have time/energy, but that are actively working in alternative education as teachers and directors, and then writing up what we discuss. I will also be willing to try and get ΣΚΟΛΕ more widely distributed in my area although salesmanship is not my forte.

I am hoping to do some networking at the Midwest Regional conference of the NCACS because the theme is getting alternative educators involved in the "current national debate on school restructuring". My thought as I read the first copy of ΣΚΟΛΕ that I

received was that these wonderful articles needed to be seen in the more traditional educational circles and that the general populace needs to be exposed to the philosophy of alternative education that was expressed so articulately in the articles. I am hoping that other people there will be interested in working toward increasing the awareness of the general populace about alternative education. I will be glad to let you know if I have any success.

As I was writing this letter I was thinking that what I would like to do is purchase a few extra copies myself and give them to several schools in the area that I think might find them interesting. Then perhaps they will be inclined to subscribe if they are as impressed with the articles as I have been.

Let me know if I can be if any help to you. Looking forward to additional issues of ΣΚΟΛΕ.

Sincerely,
Valerie Dinkeloo
Boothbay Ct.
Powell, OH 43065

An Open Letter responding to Valerie:

Dear Valerie,

What a great letter! I only regret not including it in the last issue! I think it got mislaid during our move to a new house right near our school, and only showed up again in the last couple of weeks. The new address, for your information, is 72 Philip St., Albany, NY 12202.

I don't know what happened with your subscription, but will be glad to fill in any missing issues. Perhaps the due date for you to renew your sub had not been updated by the time Michael

sent back the mailing list. This happened with several other subs. Sorry - no one's perfect, right? Transitional times are always filled with hiatuses. Anyhow, thanks for your information - and for your offer to help! Yes, please, I should very much like an article from you - as many as you want to write! And I shall send on a few extra copies when I send out the new issue later this summer. Thanks again!

By the way, ΣΚΟΛΕ is no longer the journal of the NCACS by a decision of the Board, backed up by a vote not to reconsider the original decision, in case you missed Ed Nagel's brief announcement in the Coalition newsletter. I have been agonizing about whether or not to "go public" on this intra-Coalition contretemps. Saying something is in a way airing dirty linen in public - and yet the dysfunctionality of saying nothing is equally distasteful to me. There has been no airing in the Newsletter of the ins and outs of the issue by official decision of the president - as there was none of the banning of Jerry Mintz from the Advisory Board. Am I acting disloyal or taking public revenge by saying something?

I have been really torn about this ever since it happened. These are people I love, after all! They are like my family. But perhaps that's the tipoff. I do not believe it to be a personal vendetta against me! I know that a lot of people in the Coalition like and respect me, and enjoy ΣΚΟΛΕ! This whole episode has been very painful to me, and I have been praying a lot to understand better what is wrong and how to respond to it. The best I've been able to come up with so far is that it is all going on on a non-conscious level. But it seems to be getting bigger and bigger.

The whole thing started with Jerry's statement about a person who had asked to be considered as editor of the Newsletter, as I understand it. She was apparently a passionate sympathizer with left-wing people and their issues, and Jerry said he was afraid she might politicize the Newsletter. Several people were deeply offended by this remark, being in passionate sympathy with the original sympathizer and accused Jerry in a circucular letter of being a red-baiter, being passionately offended by his statement!

Well, there were other wrinkles I needn't go into as time went by - but at any rate, the controversy grew and grew, adding layers of pro and con feelings and opinions as it snowballed - and the final upshot was that the Board voted to fire Jerry - which was their right! - but then, they also voted to blackball Jerry from membership in the Advisory Board! That felt to us folks in our school like a very anti-civil libertarian move, very undemocratic! What was it Voltaire is alleged to have said? "I loathe and despise your beliefs - but I will defend to the death your right to hold them!" Something like that.

When Chris Mercogliano and I tried to take the issue concerning Jerry back to the Board where it belonged, after hours of discussion we were finally told that there were other issues that were more important than any more discussion about Jerry, and that the matter was closed. Chris resigned from the Board in protest, and we have both since resigned from the Coalition.

Ever since, I - we - have been wrestling with understanding as to how this could have come up in an organization that bases itself on justice and freedom to be true to oneself. It feels to me

dangerously like *Animal Farm*, by George Orwell, where "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others."

The best I have been able to come up with so far in the way of understanding is as follows: I believe it is an organizational flaw of a very common variety found in many American institutions, especially "do-gooder" ones like church Boards - folks that see themselves as "the good guys." The in-fighting that goes on in many, if not most, Christian churches is profoundly anti-Christian, and occurs, it seems to me, because most people have been so deeply "scripted" against direct confrontation and resolution face-to-face that they automatically rule out the process as a negative phenomenon - as evidence that "something is wrong" - simply because it is occurring!

To me it is the ultimate paradox that this is so, remembering that we in alternative education most particularly pride ourselves on teaching our kids to hang in and work things out face-to-face - but that as adults, we can't seem to outgrow our early conditioning! Do read Robert Skenes' excellent chapter, "People Jazz," in this issue, because he says it all - and then consider the paradox that he went along *twice* with the Board's original decision to disown ΣΚΟΛΕ and with its subsequent refusal to reconsider the first ruling!

The impulse to redefine events in such a way as to rationalize doing nothing is very, very strong! I believe we have paid a huge price in America for keeping the pattern out of awareness. So I am struggling to keep the space inside me open to continuing to love and value every one of these people! It isn't easy, since I too am an American, brought up as they were.

943

Fortunately, I am realizing more and more that this really isn't a personal issue - and it sometimes even feels to me as though God is giving us all an opportunity to rethink our own inner splitnesses! Hope that doesn't sound too outlandish or pretentious. Pray for me, please! I keep hoping that if I can be strong enough to tell the truth without rancor, it may help open a space for other people - not necessarily Coalition people - people in general, Americans in particular.

Love,
Mary

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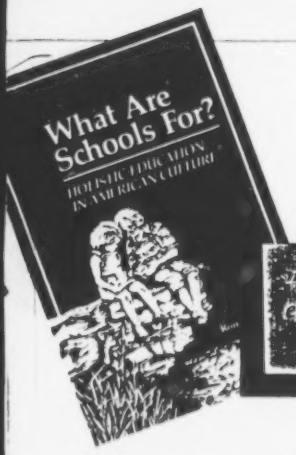

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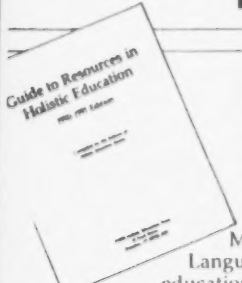

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THIS ISSUE OF ΣΚΟΛΕ IS DEDICATED TO

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!! CELEBRATED IN SONG AND STORY !!

and his band of merry men and women

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EDITORIAL COMMENT:

John Taylor Gatto, the man to whom this issue is dedicated, has been a public school teacher for 27 years. He is the New York State Teacher of the Year for 1991, a title awarded by the New York State Education Department. In addition, he was named New York City Teacher of the Year by the New York Alliance for Public Education. In 1990 he was named New York City Teacher of the Year by a State Senate resolution, and in 1989 was also named New York City Teacher of the Year by the Council of Chief State School Executives and The National Association of Secondary School Principals. But all this is merely data and sounds like an obituary.

Well, John's far from dead - or deadly! I guess I'd like to count the ways I love him; he's that kind of guy. I love the way he manages to combine his own delight in people with a splendid educational background, a tremendous store of creative energy, a taste for battle in the heroic fairytale tradition of Jack the Giantkiller, a staggering gift as a teacher, a bubbling well full of inventive ideas and resources and a silver tongue in the best Irish bard tradition, whether on paper or in person, as you may see for yourself by reading his articles in both this and the summer issue of ΣΚΟΑΕ! But the best thing about John is how you feel when you are with him. He makes you want to sing and write poems. He makes you want to surmount tall buildings in a single bound! He is an inspirer. Aside from all that, I just love him.

John gave us a wonderful workshop here in Albany in October, on the day before he was to give one of the keynote addresses at the State School Board Association conference. The next day three of us from the Free School went with him and his loyal wife Janet to the conference. Sobel, the present Commissioner of Education for New York State, who spoke after John, seemed to us pretty steamed at John, although he didn't come out with anything explicit. We sure got some hostile stares from friends of Sobel's during his address, however.

And then we get onto the extravaganza John master-minded, ably abetted by Janet, in hiring Carnegie Hall in New

York. Your editor, Dan Greenberg, Dave Lehman, Pat Farenga, the head (whose name I have forgotten, alas) of Hawthorn Valley, a nearby Waldorf school, and a number of John's remarkable ex-students all spoke. It was an event! I reproduce my speech, and hope to print some of the others in future issues.

John says the next event will be at Madison Square Garden. Who knows, he might just do it! John is a moon-leaper! He strikes me as having discovered a great secret - the fulcrum that Archimedes' lever required in order to move the earth! He has realized that life is basically polar in nature - so if you wish to affect the global level of how the world wags, you need only find the way to open up the local level to change. Or, as the ecology people say, "Think globally, act locally." Of course, timing is essential here, and John's appearance on the educational change scene during 1991 is providential in nature! The apple of education is ripe and waiting to fall! John has begun shaking the tree (while Mary is busy mixing her metaphors!).

In connection with the Carnegie Hall event, we learned that some of the big educational finance powers in New York City had actually gone so far as to try to prevent John from renting Carnegie Hall, and then actually did manage to prevent people from the Education Department at one of the State University branches from coming to the Carnegie Hall program by threatening them with reprisals, and then, someone - we didn't find out who - actually barred the media from covering it! Whew. John speaks about the education-industrial complex as wielding great power over school systems, and of the education establishment as a giant of financial and governmental power that will not yield readily to reform. The attacks on John strike me as bearing this out. They also signal his effectiveness.

So what I need to do is to get out of his way and let him speak for himself - and doing justice to John requires an entire section - so you can turn first to page 112, where it starts, if you like - but there's a lot of good stuff all through this issue, so read it your own way! What's here is only part of what was said, and I will be putting more in as I get it, in future issues.

Speaking of which, do please send me your reactions, pictures, poems, profiles and articles! Please don't become

discouraged if your article isn't out yet - I've not forgotten, I just mislay things from time to time, under archaeological layers of paper - and that problem has multiplied exponentially during the year's time it's taken us to finish rehabbing and moving into this amazing four-story house we bought last fall right on the edge of the community! They're coming to light one by one.

GUEST EDITORIALS:

PASSING THE TORCH
by Ron Miller

With this issue, my four-year tenure as editor of *Holistic Education Review* comes to a close. Starting next Spring, the journal will be edited by Dr. Jeffrey Kane, who is Dean of the School of Education at Adelphi University. I am confident that Jeff Kane will be a superb editor. He is an accomplished scholar as well as an educational visionary, with a strong background in Waldorf education and personal contacts with many important educational thinkers. He will bring to *Holistic Education Review* not only these intellectual strengths, but also a great deal of energy, dedication, and sensitivity. I'll let him introduce himself after this farewell.

For those readers who have come to appreciate *Holistic Education Review* as it has evolved up until now—don't worry! The editorial mission and focus of this journal will not be substantially changed. *Holistic Education Review will* continue to build bridges between the diverse educational movements and philosophies that make up the "holistic" educational community. It will continue to advance understanding and application of diverse person-centered, global, ecological, and spiritual approaches in education, and it will address important underlying questions and problems. It will continue to publish serious and provocative writing by today's leading-edge educational thinkers, without becoming too narrowly "academic" or "scholarly."

Even so, I would be the first to admit that *Holistic Education Review is* ready for an infusion of fresh ideas and approaches. There is no one right way to define and articulate this emerging holistic movement, and although my own perspective is quite broad and flexible, there are certainly weak spots in it. Jeff Kane, hrough his network of colleagues which includes a number of eminent scholars, will be able to fill many of these gaps. I can hardly wait for the opportunity to become a *reader* of *Holistic Education Review,* because I fully expect it to be a tremendously exciting publication in the years ahead, one that will enrich my own thinking significantly.

There is also another major change in the *Review*, starting with this issue. It is no longer published by an ambitious amateur (myself), but by the highly professional Holistic Education Press, under the direction of Charles Jakiela. Charlie had served as my production and circulation consultant for much of the time I was publisher. During these years he became deeply interested in the ideas and approaches we were promoting in this journal, and I became ever more impressed by his experience and skill in the publishing business. So it was only natural for me to turn this operation over to him when the time came for me to go on to other work. I expect Holistic Education Press to evolve into an established and recognized force in the educational world, advocating for holistic approaches in the best and widest sense. The press will support all holistic, innovative, and alternative educators in developing a strong professional identity and legitimacy in the eyes of the larger educational world. I urge all readers to support this endeavor by sharing *Holistic Education Review* and Holistic Education Press books with colleagues, parents, and students of education.

It has been a rewarding four years. In 1988, there was no recognizable holistic education movement; now, after our conferences in Chicago and Winter Park, there is a Global Alliance for Transforming Education, with regional and international chapters linking holistic educators from many diverse movements and taking their ideas to the mainstream as never before. The trans-formation of education is now a genuine possibility—although it will require a great deal more careful think-ing, hard work, and personal and collective activism.

Holishc Education Review has served as a focal point for this emerging educational revolution; I think the movement would have coalesced even without the journal—because the time is right and thousands of dedicated people are doing good work — but it has been exhilarating to find myself at the center of it, riding the tidal wave of transformation as it rushes toward the mainstream shore. I hope that editor Kane enjoys the ride as much as I have. But I'm ready for a change of pace; writing, not editing or marketing or even networking, is my true calling, and I look forward to my new work with great enthusiasm.

My work, by the way, will involve extensive research on a new book. Over these past four years, one philosophical issue has emerged time and time again as being particularly difficult and unresolved (and therefore intriguing to me):

How might a holistic perspective shed light on the relationship between personal and spiritual development and meaningful social change? Many holistic thinkers have addressed the need for personal development, but they have largely neglected important cultural and ideological questions. On the other hand, most critical theorists seem to lack an appreciation for the interior life and the spiritual/ecological context of human existence. I will try to integrate these two parallel strands of inquiry, for herein, I believe, is the essence and the distinctive contribution of holism. I will draw upon spiritual writings as well as ecological and feminist literature. Among others, I expect to work with the ideas of Matthew Fox, Thomas Merton, Rudolf Steiner, and Carl Jung. It promises to be quite fascinating. In the meantime, my writing will still appear in *Holistic Education Review*. *I* will serve on the editorial board and will contribute book reviews and essays every so often.

But for now, I say farewell. I want to thank every reader for supporting *Holistic Education Review* over the years. Every writer, and every publisher, needs an audience, and without you I could not have done this meaningful and rewarding work. I am grateful.

Peace,

Ron Miller

From: *HOLISTIC EDUCATION REVIEW, Winter, 1991.*

GUEST EDITORIALS:

A Voice for Children
Volume 1 Number 1

EDITORIAL:

Among knowledgeable educators, psychologists, and professionals from other disciplines children's innate desire, indeed their compulsion to learn, has long been accepted as fact. They agree, too, that strategies to make children learn through coercion, rewards, punishment and threats are doomed to failure since they constitute a violation of the individual, an affront to personal dignity.

The focus of public education for generations has been on how to make children learn, the indication being that educators believe children do not want to learn, and will not do so without imposed structures and strategies. Current statistics point to the fallacy of such beliefs. Efforts to make children learn have been ineffective, if not destructive for at least 30% of all children in the United States. And, not only do students not do well on standardized measures of achievement, they learn to dislike schools and many of the teachers and administrators associated with them.. Tragically for many children, humiliated by failure, angered by coercion, and frustrated by lack of recognition of their individuality, learning itself becomes, if not truly impossible, frightening and unpalatable.

One of the outcomes of the several recent national critiques of public education has been the development of "research-based" program improvement strategies by educational consulting firms. School districts and State Departments of Education are rapidly adopting one or another of those strategies, and while their long-range impact has yet to be discovered, there is little doubt that the principal goal of raising student test scores is already being realized.

One of the better known reviews of what is happening in public schools is the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy. That study enjoins teachers to commit themselves to the "pursuit of excellence" in schools. The Forum supports the view that there is an "urgency" to making "our schools once again the engines of progress, productivity and prosperity." The Forum calls for sweeping changes in educa-

tional policy, including the creation of a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the reorganization of schools to provide a professional environment for teachers, freeing them to decide how best to meet State and local goals for children while holding them, the teachers, accountable for student performance.

The theme of the Carnegie Forum report is that the profession of teaching must be upgraded if our standard of living is to be maintained, the growth of a permanent underclass is to be averted, and if democracy is to function effectively.

Productivity of teachers in terms of their ability to make children learn appears to be a bottom-line thrust of the report, a goal not dissimilar to that of the research-based initiatives. Both the Carnegie Forum recommendations and the "research-based" program improvement models reflect the intelligent, thoughtful resourcefulness of many of the nation's educational leaders. In the hands of equally intelligent and thoughtful public school administrators and teachers a variety of changes in schools are becoming apparent: teachers are friendlier to students, administrators are more supportive of teachers, classrooms are more colorful, and more student work is on display, teachers have clearer goals and objectives, parents are being consulted about their children and are encouraged to work with them at home, teachers are receiving better training, student achievement scores are being used for program improvement, leadership skills of administrators are being improved, more appropriate instructional materials, methods and approaches to teaching are being used, teachers are striving to increase the amount of time students are "on-task", individual student progress is being monitored. Students are being rewarded for good performance; teachers are being rewarded for student achievement.

But, who will speak for the children?

Search as we may, we have not been able to find in the literature, the critiques, recommendations or the program improvement models reference to children as children, individuals who love to learn, whose need to explore and discover is well-known. Nowhere did we find mention that learning is not the result of teaching, that life is, above all, an individual matter, that children have a powerful need and

and responsibility to determine their own goals, or that schools need to re-direct their focus away from prescribed curricula and program improvement efforts to the boundless energies of children to explore and discover. Nurturing that energy, it seems logical, is the answer to poor achievement, "hateful" students, " burned-out" teachers and many of the other horrors occurring in our public schools.

For too long education has been defined as the accumulation of facts, not as a tantalizing, wondrous adventure that one wants to pursue for a lifetime.

In our view accumulation of facts by children is not a view of education acceptable to most educators and parents. It has been a desperate attempt to ensure that children will, at some time in the future be able to find gainful employment in a highly-competitive society which it is believed values facts, "basic skills" above all else. Teachers and parents do not even dare consider that the world needs and looks for thinkers (or that some children are naturally thinkers), artists, inventors, poets, care-givers, dreamers. Materialism seems all-important. Having and consuming are valued above being and becoming, more important than having wonderful ideas.

Fortunately, there is also in society a startling refutation of the accumulation of facts definition of education. In a recent survey of major U.S. corporations when asked for the characteristics most sought after in employees, executives emphasized creativity, the ability to work together cooperatively, critical-thinking skills, decision-making and leadership skills. Many chief executive officers complained that young people coming out of the education system are poorly-motivated, not easily trained, and lack the ability to make a commitment to excellence. Can public schools respond, can they change? And, if so, what should be the nature of that change? Public schools, for whatever reasons, have always found deep and significant change difficult, even in the face of critical need such as we are now experiencing. But some have done so, and successfully.

In a number of public and private schools in the U.S. and other countries teachers, administrators and parents have created learning environments for children that are rich in opportunity for exploration and discovery, free from coercion, external evaluations, rewards and punishments. In such schools learning is considered a personal matter, a natur

naturally-occurring event in the life of each individual. Teachers see themselves as nurturers of that process, supportive participants in the expanding lives of children. The goal of education in those schools is to assist children in their search for the pathway toward their personal fulfillment. The evidence of the validity of their efforts is apparent in the beaming faces of the children; the proof shows up in well-balanced, successful adults who exhibit confidence, tolerance and sincerity.

The challenge to educators and parents at this time of particular crisis in public schools is to risk a new belief system, to genuinely re-structure roles and relationships, and in an act of faith declare that their children do want to learn, and will do so if they are provided with opportunity and support, without comparisons, without external expectations, evaluations, rewards, punishments or praise. It is time to re-assess what we are doing, how we view our children, w hat we believe about them.

We have opportunity, the right and the responsibility to listen to our children, to have faith in their perfect design, and to nurture the natural process of their growth and development. We can make schools meccas for children, places they love to be, places teachers love to be, places where children explore the many aspects of the world around them, where they learn self-discipline, where facts and skills become useful knowledge and make further exploration even more rewarding. The choice is ours.

The trouble with wondering is that it takes time away from learning what is really important, or does it? At least one major international corporation actively recruits employees who will with regularity ask, what if?

In my mind's ear I can hear the anxious voices of a hundred teachers asking me, "How can you tell, how can you be sure what the children are learning, or even that they are learning anything? The answer is simple. We can't tell. We can't be sure. . . Call it faith. This faith is that man is by nature a learning animal. Birds fly, fish swim; man thinks and learns. Therefore, we do not need to "motivate" children into learning, by wheedling, bribing, or bullying. We do not need to keep picking away at their minds to make sure they are learning. What we do need to do, and all we need to do is bring as much of the world as we can into the school and the

classroom; give children as much help and guidance as they need and ask for; listen respectfully when they feel like talking; and then get out of the way. We can trust them to do the rest.

FREEDOM

Recently, I was on my sailboat with a couple and their young son. The son asked me if he could take the tiller. The wind was soft and I was positive he could do nothing harmful. I handed him the tiller. Both parents started to give their son advice on what to do. I put my finger to my lips to inform them that they should do nothing. The boy took the tiller and looked at me, wanting instructions. I smiled at him, said nothing. He pushed the tiller to the right and the boat moved left, he then pulled the tiller toward him and the boat moved to the right. Within minutes he was pointing the boat where he wanted to. I then asked him to aim for a particular building in a different direction. Sure enough, like an old salt he had done it. The net result: the parents learned how capable he was and how not to interfere by "teaching", which would interfere with his learning, and by realizing how capable he was to learn on his own.

-Raymond Corsini

..."Come along then," said Jonathan Seagull. "Climb with me away from the ground, and we'll begin."

"You don't understand. My wing. I can't move my wing."

"Maynard Gull, you have the freedom to be yourself. Your true self, here and now, and nothing can stand in your way. It is the Law of the Great Gull, the Law that is."

"Are you saying I can fly?"

"I say you are free.

-from Richard Bach in *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*

Reprinted from *A Voice for Children*, a newsletter edited by Edward M. Jones, P.O. Box 4143, Santa Fe, NM 87502.

PROFILED SCHOOLS:

[I was privileged to be able to visit Summerhill for a couple of days in October. Here is a bit of what I brought back. Subsequent issues will have more! Ed.]

THE EXPERIENCE OF SUMMERHILL
by Albert Lamb

Summerhill School, the grandparent of all free schools, celebrates its 70th birthday in 1991.

Summerhill is a community of about a hundred people, mostly children between the ages of 5 and 17, with both boarding and day pupils. The rest of the members of our school in rural Suffolk are adults - teachers and other staff. Over the years kids have come to the school from every corner of the globe.

Our founder, A.S. Neill, was 37 years old when he started Summerhill and he was already established as a Progressive educational theorist through his popular books on education.

Neill had grown up in a Scottish village as the son of the local schoolteacher. Unlike his seven brothers and sisters he was not deemed worthy of being sent on to the local secondary school so he was put out to work. Several years later he drifted into schoolteaching and at the age of twenty-five took up his formal education again as a student at Edinburgh University. He began writing about education and as a young graduate, working as an acting head of a Scottish village school, he wrote the first of his twenty books, *A Dominie's Log*.

Even at this early stage in his career Neill was advocating freedom for children. During the 1st World War he visited Homer Lane's school, the Little Commonwealth, where self-government was the primary tool in helping cure "problem children". Many aspects of the structure of Summerhill were modelled on the Little Commonwealth.

From its very beginnings in 1921 Summerhill was

an international school. Neill was unusual among educational pioneers in caring more about "psychology" than about "education". During the early years Neill took many maladjusted children but in the 1930's he shifted the emphasis of the school and tried to take mostly normal children.

Neill came to see Summerhill as a therapeutic school for these normal children. His aim was to use childhood and adolescence to create emotional wholeness and personal strength. Neill thought that once this wholeness had been achieved children would be self-motivated to learn what they needed academically.

The key to this growth was to give children freedom to play for as long as they felt the need in an atmosphere of approval and love. The children were given freedom but not license. They could do as they pleased as long as it didn't bother anyone else.

Summerhill has always been a school where children are free to go to lessons or stay away from them, for years if they like. At Summerhill all the important decisions of communal life are decided through a democratic structure of weekly meetings where everyone, child or adult, has one vote.

Obviously in any system set up like this there must be a different educational goal from traditional schools. Neill denied the validity of almost all the traditional aims of education. Freedom and self-government are primarily concerned with the creation in children of a self-regulating character. "Self-regulation" means to live as owner of your own body and soul, without dependence on authoritarian structures.

This is the starting point of what is meant by being "free" in a "free school". It does not mean that you are free to do anything you please or that your life entirely lacks formal structure. You are left free to make the important decisions affecting your own life. You are left free from adult moralising and adult ambitions: to develop your own point of view.

We at Summerhill believe that a young child is self-centred and should be allowed to be so. Emotional growth, to be assured, requires an atmosphere of personal freedom and slowly increasing social responsibility. Limits need to be set by the people who live nearby, working together with the child. This was the idea behind Neill's phrase, "children should have freedom, not license".

The social control at the school has always been invested in the whole community through the Meeting and that control has always been greater than the word "freedom" would imply. Children like rules and they provide themselves with a great many of them. At any time during the history of the school there have been hundreds of "laws" on the books. Thus the emotional wholeness children gain at Summerhill comes from both their personal independence and the growing sense of their interdependence with others in the community.

At Summerhill the weekly school meetings are the self-regulating mechanism of the community. They are at the heart of the life of the school. Every week Summerhill kids and staff settle down after supper on Saturday night to make and change the laws that administer every facet of their life together. This General Meeting is concerned with announcements to the community, questions about areas of general concern and the proposal of new laws.

Each week the community picks a new Chairperson (at Summerhill called Chairman or Madam Chairman) to run the Meetings for the next week. The Secretary, who keeps the record of businesses, proposals and new laws, often holds the position for weeks at a time.

On Friday afternoon at two o'clock we have Tribunal. Tribunal is our form of law court for personal cases where people in the community can "bring other people up" if they feel they have been wronged in any way. After individual complaints have been heard the community can decide on appropriate fines. In all the

meetings at Summerhill votes are decided democratically, by majority rule.

Saturday night's General Meeting starts with a Tribunal report and people have an opportunity to appeal a fine that they think is unjust. The Chairman then calls on those who have put themselves on the agenda with businesses. Each business is handled separately and the Chairman himself cannot speak on a business without having someone take his place.

Say, for instance, that Lucille is this week's chairman. She will have no vote of her own but she has a great deal of power over the meeting. If people disrupt the Meeting she can fine them or make them leave. She can choose who will speak from the raised hands being offered, take the proposals, bring them to a vote, and close each business. If she wants to wind up a discussion she can say, "Are there any proposals?" or, "Proposals only!".

As well as the regular Tribunal and General Meeting it is possible to call Special Meetings. You have to go to the Secretary and the current Chairman and convince them of the need for immediate community action. Special Meetings are run in the same way as a Tribunal case except that the school is free to speak more generally and make new laws.

The meetings at Summerhill combine formality and flexibility in a way children instinctively understand and believe in. Surprisingly, children will sometimes bring up their best friends with no feeling that they are endangering a close relationship. Each new generation of Summerhill kids quickly learn all the subtleties of their self-government.

The General Meeting and Tribunal take up a small part of each week but their presence is constantly felt throughout the school. The number of cases that actually come to the Meeting is small compared to the times in the week that someone talks about changing a law or "bringing someone up".

In its self-government Summerhill is applying to

children what is already a philosophical truism for adults, the idea that government by the people is a good thing. It has some of the same advantages for children as for adults. When the important over-arching authority in a community is a simple majority of its members, individuals will accept and believe in this form of authority and not expend a lot of energy in rebellion. And through political action a minority at Summerhill can, over time, turn itself into a majority on any particular issue.

As well as the Meeting the school administers itself through the use of committees elected by a general vote and by Ombudsmen. At the beginning of each term there are often several committees that have to be formed or that need new members. As well as the regular ongoing committees like the Bedtimes Committee, the Library Committee or the Social Committee, the Ombudsmen are voted for in this way.

Each week three Ombudsmen are on duty to help people who need someone on the outside when they are in some kind of row. Sometimes Ombudsmen act as a witness or a representative while bringing the case to the Meeting but more often they settle the disagreement there and then. Even the staff make frequent use of the Ombudsmen as they don't want to be seen as authority figures handing down the law.

Certain issues of safety and of the practical organisation of the school are not left to the children to decide. For example domestic arrangements and health issues are not under the children's control. These limits to the democracy of the school are intentional. As much as is possible the kids have the power over their own life that they desire, and are not burdened with concerns that are beyond them. This is a subtle way in which Summerhill lets kids be kids.

An important part of the power children have over their life at Summerhill is that there are no compulsory lessons. If you don't want to study a particular subject or any subject at all that is your business. Classes are there

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for you to go to if you wish. There is a long tradition that if you sign up to go to a class and then don't attend regularly the other kids can throw you out for slowing them down. On the other hand if you want to play for weeks and years at a time that is your business. Nobody says a word.

The implication here is that what may be gained by having freedom of choice in a child's life is greater than any good that may be obtained under compulsion. Even at a young age intellectual curiosity requires freedom. At Summerhill children who have become self-motivated learn academic skills at lightning speed. Also, the growing child may know better than his adult guides what his needs are. There may be something better to do for children than study... some more important use of childhood than the traditional scholarly activities. We believe that childhood is ultimately the time needed for growing up.

This is the essence of the philosophy of Summerhill. Freedom means freedom to play and mess about and live in your emotions. It means freedom to swear and shout and refuse to take a bath. It also means freedom to explore interests in your OWN way and in your own time. As well as "freedom to", freedom means "freedom from" - from fear and coercion and intellectual force- feeding.

Many things that at other schools are taught as part of the curriculum are at Summerhill dealt with within the course of daily life. Children at Summerhill develop a strong moral code, but it is not imposed; it arises naturally out of their freedom and democracy. Children do not need to be taught about racial tolerance when they are in a sort of extended family that is an inter-racial group. The same could be said for feminist issues concerning respect for women's rights.

The school is effectively run by the oldest children. They form a group of elders that are very influential in the management of the school. When there is a body of older girls at the school, because they are so quick to

mature, they usually have a leading role in running the school and another lesson is learned without a teacher. Thus the structure provided by Summerhill includes both the democratic forms of self government and a hierarchical structure of social expectation by age.

The youngest children at the school are called San kids and live together in the San. Their houseparent looks after their welfare and has a room with many home-like comforts that is kept open for them. These six to nine year old children eagerly attend lessons with their Class One teacher and the school makes a great effort to teach them reading and writing at this age.

The House kids, who are usually between ten and twelve years of age, live along the upstairs corridor of the House. Their houseparent provides a cosy room for them to repair to but their own rooms are a bit bleak and austere. This is by design and even if the school had the money it would not be spent on carpets for the floor or pictures on the wall for this age of child. Neill referred to children of this age as being in the "gangster stage".

As a group they spend very little time at their lessons in Class Two and are not very socially responsible within the community. This is not to say that their time is wasted. The social play and self-discovery that this age experiences is, from our point of view, one of the great benefits of a Summerhill education. A great deal of important development is going on under the surface.

After months or years away from lessons children are often able to re-enter the classroom on a comparable level with children from other schools. The staff at Summerhill have recently initiated a policy of tracking the kids who have not yet learned how to read. We now offer individual instruction in reading and writing to children who were not part of Class One or who came late to the school without reading skills.

The Shack girls live on the upstairs corridor under the care of the House houseparent and the Shack boys live with their own houseparent in the building

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Times

HOME NEWS 3

'Free range' school is told to improve

Inspectors give Summerhill a mild ticking off

By DAVID TYTLER, EDUCATION EDITOR

Express

School for scandal is given a caning

By IAN MacGREGOR
Education Correspondent

A SCHOOL where pupils attend only the lessons they want and girls and boys sleep in the same room was criticised by inspectors yesterday.

Children at the 64-year Summerhill ... make up the rules ... spend much of their ... playing snooker or ski ... boarding instead of the ...

They are allowed ... swim naked, kiss, swear and smoke.

The 69-pupil East Suffolk boarding school ... renounces all discipline, moral training and religious instruction.

Warning

Pupils and teachers take part in "hugging and other expressions of care and affection", the inspectors said.

But they warned: "The ethos of the school creates potential for the abuse of trust which must be guarded against."

Boarding accommodation was found to be unsatisfactory. Most bedrooms were "bleak", while some had graffiti or were overcrowded.

Education Secretary Kenneth Clarke has told the "freedom school" to make improvements within six months.

But principal and part-owner Zoe Readhead claimed the inspectors misunderstood the school.

"There was nothing wrong with girls and boys sleeping in the same room. It happens in every household, so why not at school?"

... about half the children ... from overseas 27 from ... an, and eight from France, ... many, Indonesia, Mo... ico, Spain and the US. ... st of the pupils who stay at ... school until 16 achieve ... or five GCSE passes and ... on to further education, but ... ademic success is not the ... ain aim of the school, which ... ands by the rules of its ... wers under "We set out to make ... school in which we should ... llow children to be themselves. In order to do this we ... nounce all discipline, all ... uggestion, all moral training, ... all religious instruction."

... Nothing much has ... since the ...

Summerhill told to comply

By DAVID TYTLER, EDUCATION EDITOR

Times 29.12.99

... understanding and kindness ... Throughout his life, he fought ... the educational establishment ... and lack of funds. Summerhill ... pupils decide on discipline ...

... and the way in which the ... school is run. The inspectors ... have not been too critical of ... the educational achievement ... of the school. They praise the ... relationship between the staff ... and the 69 boys and girls even ... though they do not always ... attend the scheduled lessons.

The HMI report concedes that Summerhill's approach "can form a satisfactory basis for sound work" but adds "However, Summerhill does not achieve this consistently for all pupils. The school could now usefully consider what it might learn from others, and from a more thorough evaluation of its own work."

It also says "Important components of a broad curriculum are missing and there is a lack of balance."

Summer times

THE inspectors tell us that ... children at Summerhill, the "freedom school" (Guardian, December 18), pass their GCSEs ... despite the freedom to stay ... away from lessons if they wish. ... Meanwhile Kenneth Clarke ... sends a "letter of complaint" to ... the school about unexpected ... bedrooms. It confirms my ... opinion that not only compul... sion, but wall-to-wall carpeting, ... too, tend to rot the brain, and ... that the Minister for Education ... has strange priorities.

For 70 years A S Neill's Summerhill School has been arguing that true learning takes place where there is true freedom of choice. Has it now been proved right? What a pity we didn't take note of this before our schools got so expensively fitted up with that suffocating and woolly old pile of foam-backed cover-all — the National Curriculum.

Hylda Sims
(Ex-Summerhill pupil, London teacher)
London SE23

A.S. Neill, the founder of Summerhill

HM Inspectors catch up with 'Summerhill'

By DAVID TYTLER, EDUCATION EDITOR

Summerhill as Rohrschach inkblot, reflecting the values of the on-lookers?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

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known as the Shack. At this age kids begin to feel the pressure of the community to take a more positive part in the social life of the school. Shack kids sign up for classes in subjects of their choice and often start their preparatory work for their G.C.S.E.s.

The Carriage kids are at the top of the school. They are the true elders of the community. The boys' Shack housefather also takes care of the older boys. The girls' Carriages are housed in a separate building with the Class One teacher acting as their houseparent. Carriage kids get to have private rooms, later bedtimes and many other privileges of age and station.

At this age kids are expected to be self motivated and responsible and give back to the community some of what they have received. There is a lot of subtle community pressure to be on committees, be active in Meetings, work as Ombudsmen and generally take charge of the running of the schools life. At the same time this age group often works very hard to prepare for their exams.

It might be worthwhile to say something about the staff at Summerhill. The teachers and houseparents meet at tea and dinner in the staff room and use this forum to keep a corporate eye on the health and welfare of the school. Teachers are expected to take an active part in the life of the community and the staff as a whole work very hard to be caring and professional.

When the Carriage kids are mature enough to run the daily life of the school the staff try to take a back seat and let them get on with it. When the school is very young staff members have to be more socially active. Perhaps because the staff are not seen as figures of power, they are trusted more than at other schools and often confided in. This special relationship can give them a unique insight into individual children.

Summerhill is perhaps the only educational establishment in the world where "free-range" children have been allowed to develop and pass on their culture over the last 70 years in the context of a loving and

democratic community. It is a culture where children perceive the adult as a friend and not an enemy. For many children it is a first chance to live a life without fear, stress and adult pressure. It presents the world with a proven working alternative to keeping children resentfully sitting at desks.

Visitors to Summerhill will confirm the sincerity, honesty, and friendliness of Summerhill pupils. Her Majesty's Inspectors at a recent inspection (in 1990) were impressed by their well-adjusted personalities, their effectiveness as decision makers, the ease with which they related to adults, and their high degree of self-confidence and personal development.

Most people re-cycle to their children what they experienced in their own upbringing. Too often this means discipline which allows for neither fundamental question or discussion. If parents don't like to do the deed themselves nowadays they can leave it to the schools. Discipline backed by physical insecurity and fear becomes translated in the next generation into intolerance combined with violence.

The "core" of the Summerhill "curriculum": its egalitarian and self-governing structure through the medium of the meeting; its firm faith in the ability of children to learn in their own way at their own pace; its belief in the value of childhood in and for itself - these ideas have never been systematically attempted in the mainstream.

Summerhill is a living model of a better way to relate to children. The consequences of terrible errors in childrearing are increasingly seen in violence, child abuse and casual crime. These consequences are coming home to roost in schools themselves. Summerhill's continuing existence proves that at least one institution concerned with the welfare of children is prepared to defend childhood itself in the face of monolithic institutions of social control.

Summerhill has already had some influence on educational thinking. Neill became a well known figure

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during the 1930's in Britain and was much in demand as a speaker. During that reactionary and now seemingly stone-age period in education he had a profound effect on British teachers as well as on parents. Since that time Summerhill has been best known abroad and has had its greatest effect on schools and parents in other parts of the world.

In the 1960's Neill's book *Summerhill* sold over two million copies in the United States. In the 1970's in Germany the book sold well over a million in paperback. Recently, in the 1980's, there has been a great vogue for books about Summerhill in Japan. A collection of Neill's writings about the school called *The New Summerhill* has been accepted by Penguin and is now being read by publishers abroad.

Free schools have been started in the United States, Germany, Japan and other countries but have too often suffered from being outside the mainstream. The money and the power goes to institutions that will consolidate existing power structures, not to institutions whose only concern is to empower children.

The effect of Summerhill on modern education has always been way out of proportion to the numbers of students it has graduated. In the whole history of Summerhill only about six hundred students have been through the school. Perhaps the most noticeable effect of Neill's work has been on parents and their attitude to their children.

As an example of the latter let me quote Neill on the subject of teenage sex: "Every older pupil at Summerhill knows from my conversation and my books that I approve of a full sex life for all who wish one. I have often been asked in my lectures if I provide contraceptives at Summerhill, and if not, why not? This is an old and a vexed question that touches deep emotions in all of us. That I do not provide contraceptives is a matter of bad conscience with me, for to compromise in any way is to me difficult and alarming. On the other hand, to provide contraceptives

to children either over or under the age of consent would be a sure way of closing down my school. One cannot advance in practice too much ahead of the law."

Neill has helped several generations of parents to feel more comfortable with their own children's sexuality. He would be pleased to see how many parents today talk openly with their teenage children about questions of contraception. Still, after all these years the school itself is in the same position it has always been in with regards to the law of the land. In fact, Her Majesty's Inspectors recently informed us that our youngest children will no longer be allowed to sleep in bedrooms with the opposite sex, an arrangement that has previously been our legal right.

Summerhill is the oldest self governing community of children in the world and while many things have stayed the same over the years many things have changed. Part of the great strength of the school is that it has grown in self understanding. The most important aspect of the school has always been its attempt to provide a structure so that the school will fit the child.

While Summerhill provides a traditional academic education and is proud of the academic achievements of its graduates the real benefits of its educational program are more profound. Many children come to Summerhill with emotional problems and go away whole and strong. At the moment a third of the children in the school are Japanese, many are from other countries, but all of them are Summerhillians. Warmth, optimism, independence and self reliance are contagious qualities at Summerhill. The structure of the school lets kids be both independent and accept their responsibilities to each other in a way that is like the best of human families.

Many of the benefits of a Summerhill education are not apparent until later in life. This "invisible" aspect of the school is one of the hardest things to describe to visitors or new staff. Neill himself was a late

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bloomer and in some ways Summerhill is the ultimate environment for late bloomers. With a happy childhood tucked under your belt your future development is almost assured.

After Neill's death in 1973 his wife Ena, who had been sharing the burdens with him for many years, took over and ran the school for twelve years on her own. In 1985 Neill's daughter Zoé Readhead (pronounced "Redhead"), who had grown up as a pupil in the school, became our current Headmistress.

Summerhill's living reality seems so powerful and right that it is surprising how little interest the world has shown in what actually goes on there. After seventy years there has still never been a systematic study of Summerhill's mode of operation, its effect on pupils, and its potential consequences for educational theory and practice in the larger context of the wide world.

An example of the latter... young kids at Summerhill almost always go to lessons eagerly. Older kids also seem very interested in their studies, often working much more cheerfully than adolescents in other schools. However, kids between ten and twelve at Summerhill spend very little time in lessons. At this particular age they seem to have a great need to get out from under the weight of adult expectations. Understanding why these children make this choice might help educators design schools that would work with child nature instead of fighting against it.

The world could learn a lot from Summerhill. There are lessons to be learned here about the meaning and proper uses of childhood, and the nature of growth. It is true that Summerhill is only a tiny boarding school and does not provide the whole blueprint for the state run day-schools of the future. Still, we believe that in this worrying time of rapid technological change and rapid social fragmentation and upheaval, Summerhill has a formula that could help us produce the men and women we will be needing in the future.

Albert Lamb is known to members of the National Coalition of Alternative Schools as the father of Rosie, a longtime, active and very valuable member of the Coalition. Albert himself was a Summerhill kid, and is now a teacher and consultant there. He and Jerry Mintz were the only Americans among a group of Europeans who met with Russian alternative educators and with the Minister of Education at the Kremlin last summer. This article was originally given as a speech to the Human Scale Education Conference in May, 1991.

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PROFILED SCHOOLS:

THE EMERGENCE OF THE ARTHUR MORGAN SCHOOL

by Ernest Morgan

Ninety years ago, when Arthur Morgan was a young man, he had a vision of a new kind of school. The students and teachers would be living together in a working, learning Community, sharing responsibilities and decision making. The educational process would not be confined to conventional learning but would be a challenging and creative adventure in which the students would grow in confidence and self-esteem and in habits of cooperation with the teachers and with one another. It would be a happy place for students and teachers alike.

At that stage of his career Arthur Morgan could see no way of pursuing the dream but it continued vividly in his mind and became a definite goal.

By his middle thirties he had achieved success as a civil engineer and had accumulated enough resources to seriously consider the possibility of pursuing his dream school. He felt, however, that he was too lacking in formal education to tackle the job alone, and set out to find a colleague who would not only share his vision but could reinforce it with more normal education.

One of the people recommended to him was a young woman, Lucy Griscom, who had been educated in the Pestalozzi tradition and had a master's degree. Pestalozzi was an innovative Swiss educator of the Napoleonic Era, whose ideas had been close to those of Arthur Morgan, though Arthur had never heard of him. Not surprisingly Lucy Griscom found Arthur's ideas congenial. In fact, she found Arthur congenial too, and they were married.

Arthur had been married seven years before to a promising young woman who had died of typhoid fever in the second year of their marriage, leaving an infant son - me. Arthur and Lucy were married on my sixth

birthday.

They set about laying plans for their future school. Arthur was still heavily occupied with his engineering practice but in their spare time they developed their ideas, and hunted for an appropriate site. Finally, in the Berkshires, they found what they wanted and purchased two abandoned farms. This land was located on the Jacob's Ladder Road, where it passed through the mountains. Looking at the boulders which were everywhere, Lucy exclaimed, "Jacob would certainly have no difficulty finding a pillow here!" (Referring to the incident in the Bible where Jacob cradles his head on a stone.) The place has been called "Jacob's Pillow" ever since.

Soon we started spending our summers there, getting ready to start the school. I recall when Lucy bought a cow and, in line with her educational philosophy, put me in charge of it at age 10. She coached me a little and I did a good job, revelling in the responsibility.

But there was a sudden and unexpected shift in our family plans. My father was called to head a huge and complicated engineering job - a flood control project for Dayton, Ohio, which would require six or seven years to complete. So . . . Jacob's Pillow was put on the shelf, with plans for going ahead with it later.

Though intensely preoccupied with the engineering project, Arthur found time to bring together a group of leading citizens of Dayton, to launch a holistic school there. It was war time (World War I) and buildings were hard to come by, but one of the school's backers owned a 300 foot greenhouse which he made available. And that was where Moraine Park School was established!

It was a far cry from Arthur's dream of a rural school community, but it was just as innovative. Classes were small and informal, with active two-way communication between teachers and students. The school was like a miniature town. It had a student bank,

a student court and numerous student "projects". Some were business projects, including the school lunch room. Others were social enterprises. I had two projects. I was a partner in the Moraine Furniture Repair Company, charged with fixing the folding chairs, which always seemed to be getting broken. I was also curator of the school museum, a responsibility which I enjoyed very much.

One thing we kids did at Moraine Park was to take on the janitor work of the school, the money thus saved being used to finance an excellent summer camp. We did the work willingly and enjoyed the camp immensely. Other activities included running school gardens, visiting local industries, carrying on literary clubs, holding debates and listening to interesting speakers. Moraine Park was a nifty school, on the strength of which Arthur Morgan was elected president of the Progressive Education Association .

But Moraine Park wasn't Arthur's only educational experiment of that period. He also set up experimental schools at some of the construction camps where he was building flood control dams. Thus the children of the workmen on those jobs became the lucky guinea pigs in those experiments.

In 1920, as the Dayton Flood Control Project was nearing completion, Arthur and Lucy again started looking toward Jacob's Pillow, but once more fate took a hand. Meeting my father on the street one day a friend remarked, "Arthur, I see you've been made a trustee of Antioch.

"Antioch?" said Dad, "What's that?"

It seems that Antioch College, in nearby Yellow Springs, was in the process of failing. Dad had been put on the board by the Unitarian denomination to protect their interests. (They had a claim on some of the residual assets should the college ever close.) But they neglected to tell him!

He and Lucy drove to Yellow Springs and looked the college over. It had indeed reached the end of the

line. It was down to about 15 students, most of them local, and almost no faculty. The buildings were in disrepair. All hope seemed gone, and it was ready to close. At supper that night Arthur remarked to Lucy, "I think it's dead enough so that we could do what we want to with it."

At that moment their plans shifted to the college level. Dad recruited a strong board, raised money, assembled a fine faculty and was able to draw in an excellent student body. The ideas and plans which made this possible were based on essentially the same philosophy as the dream school - but applied at the college level. Antioch was soon going strong, and Jacob's Pillow was sold to Ted Shawn, to become a school of the dance which continues to this day.

One of the reasons why Arthur and Lucy shifted their attention to the college level, Arthur told me later, was a personal one. Despite her brilliance and idealism Lucy had emotional problems. Arthur felt that as the wife of a college president she would be happier and make a greater contribution than as co-director of a rural boarding school for adolescents; I think he was right.

Time passed, and Antioch made history. Among the students who responded to Arthur Morgan's educational challenge was Elizabeth Morey. She had been home taught - reading at five, learning arithmetic at the kitchen table and exploring knowledge eagerly in various directions. Above all, she made music, playing half a dozen instruments. When she reached the appropriate age her parents entered her in Eighth Grade. She found this exciting and went on into High School where she raced through in three and a half years as an honor student. Then, after a couple of years of secretarial work, she entered Antioch, a little older than the usual freshman.

After a couple of years at Antioch her formal education was interrupted by marrying me, and we raised a family. Then, when our children were pretty

well grown, she went back to college and completed the necessary requirements for teaching music in a public school. Then she took a job as music teacher in the nearby village of Clifton.

Her music teaching went well but, never having experienced elementary school, she was shocked by what she found. "If they were trying to stamp out imagination and creativity," she exclaimed, "they couldn't do it better! For what little the children learn, it's a great waste of their time. Mainly the schools seem to be a giant baby-sitting operation!"

After a couple of years the Clifton school was consolidated into a larger system and Elizabeth was offered a job there. She declined, and remarked to me that she wasn't going to teach again in a public school if she could help it. Elizabeth was highly creative, but a corollary of this creativity was her need for periodic change. Every seven years we had to have a change of scenery or of activity. It was in large part her need for change that made the launching of a new school seem so attractive. That was when we took the Jacob's Pillow idea off the shelf. But we had little money to spare, no wealthy friends and no foundation support. How could we start a school?

Arthur Morgan was a life-long apostle of the small community. Back in 1937 he had been instrumental in launching Celo Community, an experimental land trust community in the mountains of western North Carolina. In 1948 a young couple in this community had started Camp Celo, a summer camp for young children, conducted along the lines of holistic education. Our younger son attended Camp Celo and benefitted greatly by it, with the result that we became involved in the camp for a time, helping it through a period of transition. This, in turn, resulted in our getting acquainted with Celo Community. The community, in turn, took an interest in our projected school and, for a dollar a year, leased us fifty acres of land, with a few rudimentary buildings.

Thus encouraged, we projected a school to be opened after four years. In the meantime we planned summer work camps for kids of junior high age, to get the place ready.

But we had another, and secret, motive for carrying on this work camp. A.S. Neill, in his book *Summerhill*, had said that he had never known kids to work "without being driven to it." We were projecting a working school, and wanted to find out for ourselves if kids could be persuaded to work willingly. We needn't have worried. Working in the morning and playing in the afternoons, our campers ate it up!

Another problem was that we wouldn't be able to get tax deduction until the school was actually open. Happily this problem was solved. Celo Community had a Health Center, also instigated by Arthur Morgan, in which the doctor made a special practice of instructing his patients in taking greater responsibility for their own health. That was one of my father's ideas and the non-profit organization which governed the Health Center was named The Celo Health Education Corporation.

We asked the board of the CHEC, as it was called, if they would take our school as one of their projects - if we didn't ask them for money! They agreed, thereby giving us not only tax shelter but a capable and sympathetic board. It was a member of that board who suggested the name, The Arthur Morgan School. That name, he said, would convey an idea of the philosophy of the school and would provide a symbol around which to rally support. Sure enough, it did!

The Arthur Morgan School opened in 1962, with Elizabeth Morgan as Director. (I still had to spend most of my time in Yellow Springs.) We had chosen the junior high age group, grades 7, 8 and 9, for two reasons. First, that age group is about the youngest that can be expected to go away to school. Second, it is about the oldest group in which basic habits and values can readily be altered. Besides, the academic demands of Grades 10, 11 and 12,

being geared to college prep, require a more demanding level of equipment and sophistication. We were influenced too by the thought that the junior high level is probably the most neglected - and perhaps the most difficult - in modern education. Anyhow, that was the level we chose.

It was an uphill struggle. Coming mainly from public schools the kids tended to be docile and lacking in self-esteem. At the same time they were competitive and self-centered. Elizabeth and her staff worked hard to change this, and with time made progress.I recall a striking incident. AMS, as we call it, had a fine folk dance team, which took part in the annual competition in the Southern Youth Jamboree, in Asheville. For two years our team won first place in its class. The third year Elizabeth forbade them to compete. "Dancing is for joy!" she said, "Not to beat somebody."She had seen kids leaving the Jamboree crying because their teams had lost.

Happily, our group was accepted as an "exhibition team." In their performance they were relaxed and smiling happily at each other, dancing beautifully. They were in sharp contrast to the other teams, who danced grimly, as though their lives depended on it.

Tucked away in a mountain wilderness, AMS seems remote from the issues of the world. But is it?

For three weeks every February the entire school embarks on field trips. One group may visit a refugee camp in Texas, another may take a canoe trip in the Everglades or a bike trip through Georgia. Another may join a civic project in Washington or Philadelphia. The trips are never two years the same, but every one involves service work of some sort.

Returning home there is general rejoicing as the school is reunited, followed by much exchanging of experiences.

A recent special trip in which almost the whole school took part was an expedition to Oak Ridge, Tennessee to witness the trial of three women who had

engaged in civil disobedience against the manufacture of nuclear weapons. All sides were heard and the students were intensely interested. Ironically, the AMS delegation received more (and favorable) news coverage than did the trial itself.

Work and decision-making are actively shared at AMS. Once, at All-school Meeting, one of the students was feeling out just how far student decision-making might reach. "Could we decide to abolish classes?" He asked.

"Let's talk about it." Elizabeth said. "What do you think?" There was some lively discussion and the students quickly reached consensus that classes were important.

On another occasion the woman in charge of the kitchen complained at All-school Meeting that someone had jabbed a screwdriver through the lid of a jar of peanut butter, and left it there. The Meeting discussed this and the English teacher suggested that his class write papers on why someone would jab a screwdriver into a jar of peanut butter.

At the next All-school Meeting the papers were read. Some would have done credit to a psychologist. Others would not. Discussion followed and morning classes were cancelled so that it might continue. This proved to be a remarkable educational experience.

At the end a question was raised as to whether the pantry door should be locked. It was quickly agreed that after this discussion it wouldn't be necessary.

An equally dramatic episode occurred in connection with seating in the lunchroom. Noise in the lunchroom was a perennial problem and at one point the staff decided to have assigned seating. The students didn't like this, and at the next All-school Meeting a motion was made (though they usually decided by consensus) to abolish assigned seating. All the students voted for it, all the staff against it. There were more students than staff.

I was sitting in on that meeting as a spectator and

wondered how the staff was going to cope. Would they bow to the students, or would they declare a dictatorship? At this point one of the staff spoke up. "Now that we've passed that motion," he said, "It brings us back to the problem which assigned seating was intended to solve - the matter of noise in the dining room. I suggest that we adopt a policy - not a rigid rule, but a policy - that when we sit down in the dining room at least one place shall be left at each table for a staff member, so he or she can quiet the table if it gets too noisy." This suggestion was readily adopted by consensus - a win-win solution.

AMS didn't - and still doesn't - give grades to its students. Instead each staff member writes periodic "evaluations" of the classwork and other activities of the students with whom he or she is closely associated.

Before being sent to the parents these evaluations are shown to the individual students, who are invited to Make any comments they feel to be in order. In general the evaluations are better than the students expected, and this brightens their lives.

Now and then the contrary is the case. I remember Elizabeth delaying sending an evaluation to the parents, to give the student time to improve the report.

Most schools to which the students transfer appreciate evaluations. A few require grades, in which cases AMS does translate the evaluations into letter grades.

What is handled as "discipline" in most schools assumes some interesting variations at AMS.

When a couple of students become embroiled in a quarrel, as sometimes happens, a "clearness committee" is invoked. This generally consists of the staff advisors of the two students, and the students themselves. A quiet session of thoughtful communication often eases the conflict.

When an individual behaviour problem is involved it is often effective to have the student select a "support group" of friends who will use their influence to help

keep the problem student in line. Such a group commonly consists of two staff members and two students. The efforts of the group members assume the quality of help rather than authoritarian discipline.

The 9th Graders are the "Seniors" at AMS, and they tend to set the tone for the student body. In general the school prefers to raise its own 9th Graders though sometimes outstanding young people enter as 9th Graders and make a real contribution.

Sometimes when a student finishes 8th Grade without having achieved a positive, outgoing attitude, he or she is not considered as being ready for the status of "Senior", and is asked to find another school. "You aren't quite ready to be a Senior yet. You will do better to attend a school where you will be a Freshman."

Sometimes an 8th Grader of dubious desirability, urgently wishing to return, puts forth special effort to make the required improvement.

One thing we have learned at AMS is that apparent failures are not always final.

I recall a student in Elizabeth's era, an attractive, intelligent girl, who seemed totally bland and submissive - no starch at all. Elizabeth worried about her and tried to wake her up, particularly through music teaching. Finally, sure enough, the girl showed signs of life, becoming rebellious and downright hostile. After leaving AMS she even persuaded a desirable prospective student not to come.

Years passed, and an article by this young woman appeared in a national magazine, telling about a wonderful school in North Carolina which she had attended, and how she wished she might be on its staff some day. Later she married, and had a family, naming her first child Morgan.

One non-final failure at AMS involved a boy who tended to be violent. Elizabeth was afraid he might injure some of the other boys, and invited him not to return for a second year.

One day, many years later, a pick-up truck drove

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in, and a radiant young man got out, along with his wife and little daughter. He was that same boy! In the course of his visit he remarked, "But for AMS I think I would have been a "delinquent ."

After seven successful years directing AMS Elizabeth resigned. "Oh no, Elizabeth! No one but you can do it!" said the board, and insisted that she continue. She yielded to their urging and did so, but the eighth year was traumatic, and she developed cancer and almost died. Her place was taken by a young man from the staff, who did very well. As she recovered from her illness she stayed away from the school to avoid cramping him - but he drew her back into activity, as music teacher and librarian, and found her very supportive.

Elizabeth enjoyed her new role and contributed generously to the life of the school. However, the cancer returned, and she died a year later, in 1971, but the direction of the school had been well established, and carried on through the years, always changing but always with the same central thrust. It is curious to note that of the three directors - excellent men - who were brought in from outside, all were failures. One didn't even last out the year. However, all the directors who were recruited from within were successful. Apparently there is an organizational culture at AMS that has to be experienced before it can be led.

Later the school abolished the post of Director, and is now "staff run." Instead of a director it has a "clerk" or "co-clerks", after the manner of Friends. It still has a board which shares in its governance, albeit usually in an advisory capacity.

One part of Arthur Morgan's educational dream didn't work out very well. He envisioned the school as having small businesses which would make it at least partly self-supporting.

In the early years of the new Antioch he attempted that. There were the Antioch Press, the Antioch Foundry and the Antioch Shoe project. One, the

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Antioch Press, survived for over 25 years, but in the end they all went out of business or transferred to private management. However, the *idea* of starting small businesses did take root and Antioch gave rise to several flourishing local industries in the hands of Antioch alumni, which contribute generously to the college.

We tried the same idea at AMS. First was Celo Press, a printing and publishing company, which put out a book I had written. That book, *A Manual of Simple Burial*, grew through twelve editions into a substantial volume, *Dealing Creatively With Death*, with strong sales. But the people in charge of the project tried to develop the Press into a regular publishing business, and lost money in the process, whereupon the endowment committee decided to close it out. Happily, the publishing of my book was taken over by an AMS alumnus from 20 years ago who now has a publishing business of his own.

A more unusual business taken on by AMS was Celo Laboratories, a firm started by a Celo Community member to merchandise standard pharmaceutical products of good quality under their generic names at prices substantially below the identical products under brand names. It was a valuable service, and when the man left Celo he gave the mail order part of the business to AMS. Another community member, who knew the business and was a friend of the school, agreed to manage it for us.

This led to a remarkable incident. A 9th Grade girl from AMS, as her work project, went each day to the Celo Labs office to help with the work. Suddenly the man died of a heart attack. None of the AMS staff knew the business - but the 9th Grade girl did! Accordingly it fell to her lot to train in a new manager. The effect on the girl was amazing. Almost overnight she emerged from a timid, unsure child into a confident, poised young woman! We wished that the man who had died might have seen that transformation.

Later a direct mail co-op entered the field with the

same line of generic pharmaceuticals - and at even lower prices. We saw the handwriting on the wall - or so we thought - and felt that our little business was no longer needed. So we turned our business over to the co-op. That was a mistake. A year or so later the co-op went out of business. We should have hung on.

Despite the poor results with school-owned businesses at Antioch and AMS I still think there are possibilities in that direction - possibly some sort of a partnership arrangement between the institution and the management of the business. There is an organization called "Education with Production" devoted to the idea of businesses in educational institutions. I heartily wish them well.

Not surprisingly, we have been told by Montessori people that the Arthur Morgan School is the closest thing they have found to the "*Erdkinder*" projected by Madame Montessori. That is high praise.

The finest testimony to the school which I remember was the remark of a girl who had spent three years at AMS and had then gone on to a regular high school. She had dropped by for a visit.

"How did you find the transition?" I asked.

"Very difficult." she said.

"In what particular subjects?"

"Academics?" she said, "No problem. The difficult part was going from a place where people cared about each other to a place where nobody cared about anyone but himself." Just the same, she had been successful in developing a circle of friends.

A different kind of testimony was experienced in 1988, on the occasion of the celebration of the school's 25th anniversary. Forty per cent of all the students who had ever come to AMS showed up, coming from all over the country and with all the classes represented, as well as a large number of former staff members. A remarkable turnout for a junior high school with a national clientele.

Now in its 29th year, AMS still carries the banner

of holistic education raised by Arthur Morgan nearly a century ago.

We are grateful to Ernest Morgan for permission to publish his splendid article on Arthur Morgan School and on the remarkable lives of his gifted family! The school may be contacted at 1901 Hannah Branch Road, Burnsville, NC 28714.

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"LASST UNS UNSERN KINDERN LEBEN!"
(Come, let us allow our children to live!): Froebelian principles of educational freedom in contemporary pedagogy

by John Froebel-Parker

"*Lasst uns unsern Kindern leben*," that oft cited exhortation uttered 140 years ago by Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel must become a rallying cry for contemporary education. The German pedagogue and founder of kindergarten was a proponent of "natural development." He saw the child as a flower which must be cultivated in order that it might grow into its own individual and complete beauty - all under the nurturing gaze of the "*Kindergaertnerin*," or kindergarten "teacher" whose job it was to aid and suggest, model and facilitate but never mandate or cajole. In this model all children were invited to participate, and, although among his supporters were Baroness von Marenthal-Buelow and the Queen of Saxony, he insisted that youngsters from "*Krethi und Plethi*," from the workers to the nobility, had the right to develop side by side to their highest potential.

These ideas were thought too radical for the Prussian regime of the day and too easily related to Friedrich's nephew, Julius Froebel's "socialistic tendencies." Julius, ex-consul to Smyrna, had been sentenced in absentia to death after the revolutionary period of 1848 and fled to the United States, where he involved himself in German-American political movements. Thereupon was issued the infamous "*Kindergartenverbot*," which put a crushing halt to Friedrich Froebel's dream of liberal, free, and child-centered early childhood education.

Luckily, many of the progressive intelligentsia left Prussia for England and the United States where his ideas were furthered, notably by Baroness von Marenthal-Buelow and his great-niece, Henriette Schrader-Breymann. One institute still alive today as a result of that philosophical migration is the Froebel

Institute and Teachers Training Center in Roehampton Lane in London. Society then as today often actively seeks to eliminate the threat of true freedom of thought. Then Julius was sentenced to death, and Friedrich died of a "broken heart," which today would be called severe depression upon seeing his vision publicly extinguished. Today, system-oriented education results in children trained early in conformity though told that they are free - or young people who abandon institutionalized education which has never prized nor furthered their innate characters or talents. Though there are many laudable advances and programs in public school systems, I believe, as institutions they effectively squelch the "natural development" that Froebel so fervently defended.

Elizabeth Ferm, active in founding the Modern School based on the philosophies of Francisco Ferrer and Froebel, emphasized that point, as evidenced in this quote from her book *Freedom in Education*:

> A visit to any average kindergarten will convince an educator that Froebel's conception of education is not comprehended as yet. Instead of individuality we find the subjection of the individual; instead of self-activity we find work resulting from either suggestion or direction. Instead of finding the child applying himself to an object which attracts him, going back again and again as long as he finds self-interest in it, as a child in spontaneity will do, we find a custodian of children, skilled in ways and means to excite, and then, in turn, to quiet the child for some interest of her own... Instead of helping the child to gain true knowledge - knowledge of himself - he is constantly turned away from himself to objects and interests outside of himself. The child is urged to follow a path mapped out by the one in charge of the kindergarten, with no element of his selfhood in it, unless it can be called selfhood

when he says, does, and moves as is instructed.

Elizabeth could have witnessed the same dynamics in elementary, secondary or university situations in which there Is a manipulation of action, thinking and pseudo-creative production which annihilates the process of investigation and intellectual growth. How well I remember asking one of my professors why we were not reading any works of literature by medieval women writers - only to hear from him that there "were none...women did not write then." Luckily I did not take the system so very seriously, except to realize that this man would assign an "evaluative" grade to me at the end of the semester; otherwise I might have accepted that statement as "*wahre Muenzen*" or "true coins" and have accepted the notion that women had nothing to convey in writing in that period at all. In a free system the professor could have said, "That would be fascinating to find out." Instead, there was an imposition of a posture which could have and probably did impede the true acquisition of knowledge for many students in the class.

In language instruction until recently we witnessed the shortcomings of the direct translation method, the grammar method, and the audio-visual method. I learned Latin by the first and was astounded when friends from Great Britain one day amused themselves with whole conversations in that "dead" (that is what I had been told) tongue. Somewhere along the line their education mentors had fostered self-expression in "Latin as a Living Language," whereas I had been offered "Latin as a Dead Language." It is only as "dead" or "alive" as it is permitted to be. Our students are only as "dead" or "alive" as we permit them to be, although they will run away from the system by dropping out or tuning out as a way of escaping a sense of belittlement or subjugation.

English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers have a wonderful opportunity to foster and promote free

and student-centered education which prizes each individual as unique and additive to the common experience. We want our students to maintain and foster their dignity, and do not demand "Americanization," "Canadianization," "Anglicization," or "Australianization" as the bridge to effective acquisition of English. There is realization in the profession that such monolithic paradigms are quite artificial in nature and pedantic in exercise. There is room for everyone in the garden of English-language learners, as there was in Froebel's kindergarten.

In my original talk I illustrated this point with anecdotes from my own professional experience. I urge you to think of your own successes and testimony to the sublime beauty of freedom in education. As ESL teachers we are student-centered, we promote increased "student talk-time," and we offer respect for the home culture, while making a home for it in the school setting. These approaches to education can save myriad boys and girls and adults who come into our educational trust. We must live with and alongside our children, not above them in Byzantine style. By giving them the recognition, respect, and friendship that we are capable of, we can infuse contemporary pedagogy with Froebelian principles, which are learner-centered, and help prepare people with healthier self concepts, courage to question and grow, and a sense of empowerment which must lead to stronger democracy and personal fulfillment.

This article is based on remarks given at the 1991 Capital District New York State Teachers of English as a Second Language Conference in Albany, New York, by John Froebel-Parker. The author is a great, great grandson of Friedrich Froebel (not sure quite how many "greats"), and runs an internationally-based art gallery in Albany, New York and Madrid, Spain.

An article on the Modern School of which John speaks appeared in the Summer, 1991 issue of ΣΚΟΑΕ, taken from an address given by Jo Ann Wheeler Burbank at the 1990 reunion of Friends of the Modern School.

POEM BY WILLIAM BLAKE:

The Garden of Love

I went to the Garden of Love,
And saw what I never had seen:
A Chapel was built in the midst,
Where I used to play on the green.

And the gates of this Chapel were shut,
And "Thou shalt not" writ over the door;
So I turned to the Garden of Love
That so many sweet flowers bore;

And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tomb-stones where flowers should be;
And Priests in black gowns were walking their rounds,
And binding with briars my joys and desires.

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ARTICLE:
DRAFT OF A BOOK PROPOSAL:

THE LEARNING SOCIETY
by Robert Theobald
(from *Turning the Century*, Chapter 5)

Human beings are now co-creators of the future. The large-scale decisions that must be made during the nineties will inevitably determine the shape of the twenty-first century and whether conditions will worsen or improve for the population of the globe.

I have already argued for the further development of the ideals which lie behind democracy. I now want to connect democracy, good communication, effective decisionmaking and profoundly new forms of education. Sir Geoffrey Vickers was a remarkable Englishman who studied the critical importance of effective and honest communication for future survival. In a speech given in Spokane in 1974 he concluded a highly provocative speech with a set of ideas which I cite at length because of their critical importance:

1. The world we live in demands and depends on skill in communication and in knowledge relevant to communication to an extent far beyond anything previously known....

2. Communication also depends on trust ... and imposes on communicators a duty to sustain the level of communication, not only by their skill and knowledge but by being trustworthy communicators.

3. This is the more important because there is a "law" of communication similar to "Gresham's Law" in economics. Bad communication drives out good communication. A small minority with a

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few bombs and a lot of self-righteousness can soon reduce the level of communication in a whole society to the basic level of mutual threat.

4. Thus the duty I have described assumes an importance, as well as a difficulty, which can hardly be exaggerated. It seems to me a trans-cultural human duty to sustain the level of communication, to resist its debasement and to cooperate in raising it.

5. The direction in which this duty points seems to me to me the direction of the more human, rather than the less human; a vector which we can recognize as transcultural and which claims the allegiance of the whole species. It may be the only dimension in which any kind of progress is possible. It is surely a precondition for progress of any other kind.

I had first become aware of the importance of this point back in the sixties. A close colleague published a book in which he cited some figures which seemed totally unrealistic to me. I challenged him on their validity. He told me he knew the figures were wrong but he believed they were the way to manipulate people so they would decide to move in the direction he thought was appropriate. It was clear to me, however, that the distortion he had chosen was just as likely to result in the opposite result as the one he desired. The only hope any of us can have to move events in appropriate directions is to tell the truth as honestly as we can and to listen to others do we can evaluate their understandings. The belief that our ideas are necessarily right, and that it is therefore proper for us to lie to advance our particular cause, is part of industrial-era patterns.

It is in the context of Sir Geoffrey Vickers arguments that America s decisions in the Gulf War of 1991 so clearly moved us in negative directions. It will be

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impossible to move beyond power policies until it is fully realized why they do not work. Power has always been seen as desirable because it could be used to force others to behave in the way that the person with power wanted. So long as systems were closed, power was effective. So long as slavery was an agreed system, the slave had no options. He could not hide and he could not run.

To look at the same issue on a broader scale, the colonial powers were largely able to enforce their will in the nineteenth century because they had an effective monopoly of both technological and moral force. The white races believed that they had the truth and the right to enforce it. They were largely invincible under these circumstances.

The twentieth century has seen the breakdown of this model from two sides. First, the rest of the world has come to believe that their views are also of value. There is a growing challenge to Western values from other traditions ranging from the Moslem to the Chinese. In addition, the West's views are also under challenge from within as more and more thoughtful people deny the right of the West to impose their values in a world which is increasingly seen as diverse and pluralistic.

In these circumstances, power will inevitably backfire. This is the lesson everybody must learn from the Gulf War is even worse errors are not to be made in the future. The powers which were led by the United States were able to overcome Iraq. But the amount of power used developed and defined massive counterforces which will play themselves out on the world scene for years and decades to come. There were two propaganda campaigns during the Iraq war and they were both successful with their own publics. The allies succeeded in portraying Hussein as a devil and created strong support. But at the same time Hussein was able to create pride and anger in the Arab and Moslem world.

The primary error was made by the United States which used an obsolete colonial model. It was right to

react strongly to the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, although one must wonder why this act of Iraq's proved the last straw rather than earlier intolerable patterns such as the use of chemical weapons on the Kurds. One can also wonder why it was the violence in the Gulf which led to such a strong reaction rather than far more destructive violence elsewhere in the world, particularly Cambodia.

Oil was obviously the special factor which led to the extraordinary reaction by the world community, led by America. Nevertheless, the invasion of Kuwait could have been an opportunity to move toward a new standard of world order. And the initial embargo proved the potential for many countries in the world to unite across cultural and religious boundaries. The world's cohesion could have provided an opportunity for the Middle East states to look at the long-run problems and begin to work to defuse the festering problems of millennia. The problem was that the Bush Administration did not have the patience for a prolonged test of wills. In October, George Bush embarked on an offensive, rather than a containment, course which made war inevitable.

The cause of negotiation and dialogue has therefore been set back just at the time when there is most need for it. The survival of the world in the twenty-first century depends on a growing willingness to work through the tough issues of our time in the belief that everybody will strive to find just and equitable answers. The Iraqi war made it less possible to believe that dialogue and negotiation is the wave of the future.

In addition, the Iraqi war took the world s attention to such an extent that profoundly negative dynamics took place elsewhere without effective challenge from other countries. The Soviet Union was able to reimpose dictatorial styles without much outside attention. China was able to continue its crackdown on dissidents with far less danger of a backlash. In addition, there was little time, attention and energy to

deal with other festering issues such as the Savings and Loan Crisis. One day early in the war, there was a demand for an additional $30 billion dollars to manage this issue. The TV commentator, when reporting it at the very end of the news bulletin, stated that this would almost certainly have been the lead story if the Gulf War were not in progress.

The rich countries, and the current decision-makers in the poor counties, have every reason to make resort to force less likely rather than to accept it as the way to settle disputes in the future. The rich have much to lose by violence; the poor have far less. The nightmare scenario for the future is that the poor people of the world will decide that there is no possibility of influencing the rich to treat them with fairness and will move toward continuing terrorism. The time is already very late. The difficulties which were already inevitable in the nineties have been magnified dramatically by the Gulf crisis.

(This material is written in late January, it will be enlarged and revised before publication in the light of events.)

New educational directions.

The belief that it is possible and necessary to resolve disagreements without violence requires a profoundly new mind-set. If we are to survive, our children must learn this lesson at the same time as they discover how to cope with a universe of diversity and rapid change. We must create an educational system which prepares students to live in a complex world and have constructive ideas about appropriate directions. The approaches designed to meet these goals will necessarily be profoundly different from those which existed in the industrial era.

The educational world is locked in a major struggle at the current time. On one side, there are those who want to maintain current schooling patterns while

improving their efficiency. People who hold this view argue that there is nothing seriously wrong with what is taught by industrial-era schools and colleges if only they would recommit to their traditional goals of providing the best current answers to questions and testing people on their recall of what they have learnt.

Those on the other side of the argument believe that students need to learn fundamentally different styles and skills than those taught in the industrial era if they are to survive in the twenty-first century. They propose that instead of solely measuring mastery of content, people should also be evaluated in terms of their ability to learn to learn on a continuing basis.

Grasping the nature of the educational debate and its direction is increasingly difficult. Both sides are tending to use the same rhetoric but the proposals they make would have very different consequences. There are also major surprises as one evaluates the arguments used to support the various positions. For example, many of those who reject the need for radical reform support their case by quoting the success of the Japanese educational system. They do not recognize that there are major worries, both in Japan and outside, about the long-run consequences of the rigid Japanese system which does not promote creativity.

There are at least four major areas of disagreement between those who believe that fundamental change is necessary and those who are convinced t.hat reform of current systems will he enough. First the current system concentrates on what happens in schools and colleges while those who want change argue that education must be broadened to include parents, churches, the media and indeed all the forces that cause people to see the world in a new way. Second, the current system concentrates on the period from 5 to 15, 18, 22 or 30 while those who want change look at the whole of life from conception to death. Third, the current system uses a very limited number of styles of learning while those who want change prove that

different people learn in a large variety of ways. Fourth, those who want to preserve the current system opt for a broadened core curriculum while those who want fundamental change believe it can only be achieved by treating everybody as an individual.

Traditional schooling.

America's rambunctious social systems provide freedom and result in creativity. Unfortunately, traditional schooling patterns still undermine the imagination we shall increasingly need as we enter the twenty-first century. One of the most urgent tasks is to face fully why the skills of the past will no longer meet the needs of the future. The profound, underlying messages of traditional schools are to:

-- obey those in charge without question,
-- put excessive emphasis on specializations
-- erect rigid boundaries between courses, particularly between the arts, sciences and humanities
-- expect certainty and stability,
-- understand that the world is divided into superiors and inferiors and therefore learn to struggle to be on top.

How are these lessons taught? The teacher and the principal are authority figures with the right to reward and punish. Children and young adults are expected to obey the rules, largely without question. Margaret Mead had a wry comment on this pattern. She pointed out that a child who left school for the real world at the age of 15 or 18 is expected to make decisions for themselves while the high-school and university student continues to be protected within an artificial world.

Traditional teachers also lead their students to believe that there are answers to all questions. Most students therefore see no necessity to be creative because

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they are brought up to believe that the teacher knows the proper response. This pattern also leads them to expect certainty and stability. One of the most difficult steps in my own career came when I discovered that there was often nobody on whom I could rely to do my thinking for me and that I had to work through new realities for myself.

The acceptance of expertise becomes ingrained over time. In the sixties I managed, after great effort, to convince a particular teacher that he ought to consider working with students in a dialogue mode. I didn't know whether to laugh or cry when he came back after one hour in the classroom saying; "Well, I tried to get the students involved but they weren't interested. I always knew you were wrong when you talked about the potential of kids."

One of the reasons it is difficult to get students educated within traditional models to talk freely is that industrial-era patterns of grading impose a model of superiority and inferiority. They force people to see themselves as "good" or "bad" students. Good students are, however, often those who feedback to teachers what they have previously been taught. Bad students are those who tend to rebel against the system: they are often those who are either very bright or those who find the whole process of schooling irrelevant to their needs and potentials. Their ideas are therefore frequently the most novel but they tend to be silent because they have been squashed in the past.

The imposition of a single method of evaluating people also prevents us from recognizing the various types of skills that exist. The model which used to exist in the one-room school where teachers found a valid reason to give a prize to all students for something they did well should be emulated today.

The concept of grading is flawed in many ways. The most crucial is that we now know that passing and failing grades are based in large part on the relationship of the teacher to the student. Good students are nurtured

and therefore do better: weak students are often ignored and do worse. Grades are therefore, in large part, a self-fulfilling prophecy. There is a classic story in this area. On one occasion, a teacher was provided with a list which reversed the grades of students. At the end of the year most of the young people had met the expectations which were thus generated. Weak students blossomed under the attention. Those who had previously done well, withered as they were ignored.

The message that there is a top and a bottom in society is central to current schooling systems. If these are the only options, then most people will find it infinitely more attractive to be one of those with power and money than to be without. Indeed, once people have experienced the attractiveness of superiority, even equality with others begins to sour for many of them. This is the viewpoint which Gilbert announced in one of his comic operas claiming that "when everybody's somebody, then no one's anybody."

On the other hand, some people resign themselves to being on the bottom. They downgrade the very real skills they have and come to feel that they have no significant contribution to make. The waste of human potential which occurs in this way is huge and chilling.

A new educational model.

During 1990 I worked with a group drawn from all parts of Lewis and Clark Community College in the RiverBend area of Illinois, just north of St. Louis. After a good deal of struggle, we managed to reach conclusions which stressed very different challenges from those of the past.

The statement said:

> We believe that education empowers individuals by giving them choices. Education enables them to develop their personal potential by eliminating or bridging obstacles. Education allows citizens to participate in the political,

economic, scientific, technological and aesthetic progress of their culture to the greatest possible extent. Formal education is not an end in itself, it supports a learning process which continues throughout life.

Lewis and Clark Community College is a community of learners, mutually committed to the pursuit of excellence in the learning process and to providing open access to education. This is the vision which has inspired the community college movement from the beginning and it has resulted in a system of education which is significantly different from the traditional one.

We are committed to creating an environment in which creativity can flourish. We believe that progress is the result of purposeful, systemic, rational and compassionate decision-making. The most effective learning occurs when conscious and consistent efforts are made to integrate theory and practice.

Members of this learning community are characterized by:

-- a sense of the responsibilities of global citizenship and environmental stewardship - an ability to work with others and to share skills to achieve goals
-- a flexible mind able to adapt quickly to change
-- a wide range of communication skills, including reading, writing, listening and speaking
-- an ability to make ethical and moral decisions
-- an ability to analyze problems and think critically
-- a mastery of independent learning - a mastery of appropriate content.

While content will still be important in the future, the primary teaching in the compassionate era is about process so people can keep up with the pace of change. Learning process skills is the very basis of our survival in the twenty-first century. One of the primary needs for discovering process skills is to show people why they must learn to live in a value-based culture and honor diversity.

Learning about process takes place in every formal and informal communication. We can no longer afford to look solely, or even primarily, at schools and colleges for the source of education. We must involve families, friends, churches, communities, work-places, television, computers etc. All of them provide information about different patterns of behavior which can be examined and considered as possibilities for ourselves.

Unfortunately, all too many of the images we and our children see and hear are not conducive to learning to live in a value-based world. This is the fundamental argument for changing the ways messages are sent in our culture. If people are to behave positively, they must be able to find positive models in real life, in television and in art. Unfortunately, these are in scarce supply, particularly for minority communities.

Process teaching enables people to learn the skills to live in the questions of our time without seeking for premature closure and slick responses. It enables each of us to understand that the same events can be seen in very different ways by people with different viewpoints. For example, interpretations of events are often very different in the rich and the poor countries or between whites and non-whites. The belief that there can be a single, definitively correct answer is obsolete. Directions can therefore no longer be appropriately imposed based on the power of a single group.

We therefore need to understand the profoundly different viewpoints which exist within societies, let

alone throughout the world. The Japanese film *Rashomon* was one of the first to help us grasp how differently the same event could be understood. A story of violence by a Samurai warrior toward a woman was depicted from various angles. The viewer was left to decide where the truth lay. I would still recommend this film as one way to start a discussion of how to uncover the various truths in a situation where people disagree about what really happened.

Any honest search for reality always requires us to understand the different views of the various participants and their behavior patterns. Edward T. Hall's book *The Silent Language* was the first one which helped the general public grasp that a positive signal in one area of the world might be viewed as an insult in another. Much of science-fiction also deals with this problem of cross-cultural communication. It is immensely helpful for students to encounter different models of reality when they are young because this prepares them for the increasing diversity of the world they will have to manage in their adult years.

Conflicts can turn violent when the participants on various sides of an issue all feel that their case is the best one and that they are "winning." One of the problems of the Iraqi war was that both sides felt for a very long time that they were achieving their goals. There was little recognition among the decision-makers on either side that the assumptions and belief systems were so different that total misunderstandings were not only probable, but almost inevitable given the initial stands of Presidents Bush and Hussein.

Once one recognizes that the messages people send are far more complex than the words they say, one learns that it is useful to know body language and styles to help understand what is really going on. When is a person telling the truth and when are they shading it or deliberately lying? Is a person shy or aggressive? Is an individual a natural leader or can she be encouraged to be a leader? What are the goals which their cultural

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upbringing has taught them to value? Are they similar to one's own or widely divergent?

Another needed learning is to discover the most appropriate medium for sending messages. One can use words and art and games and video and audio and computers and telephones. Each of these has its own quirks and implications. Some people learn best from one medium and some from another. Some lessons are best learnt using one medium and others are best communicated in another. Each of us have different skills and can communicate best using one medium or another.

One interesting way to gain additional insights about how communication really takes place is to learn another language. Perfect translations from one language to another are impossible because a language carries a worldview with it. One can say different things in French than one can in English. indeed I can be a "different" person when speaking French than when speaking English. Everybody can benefit from knowing another language. Unfortunately, languages are taught at the wrong time in children's lives. There is clear evidence that learning a language is fun before the age of 10. In teen-age years and at college it is a chore, if not worse. As a result far fewer people know languages than could be the case.

There are, of course, other "languages" besides French, Spanish, Hopi, English etc. For example, physics is a language which provides a unique way of looking at the world. I first understood this when I was being driven back from a speaking date. A high school physicist explained to me that he did not primarily teach the experiments physicists performed when working with students who were only taking a single course in physics. Instead he concentrated on why he personally found it interesting to look at the world as a physicist. Similarly, astronomers and engineers and artists and physicians and plumbers and electricians and golfers all have unique views which are worth understanding.

This is the reason I find it easy to talk with other people and to learn from them. I find the world they have chosen to live in fascinating even if I do not have the time to enter it for myself - and in some cases would not want to have anything to do with it.

Once people have learned effective communication skills, the next step is to encourage them to work with each other so they can benefit from diverse understandings. Most work in school and college today is evaluated on an individual basis. In the future far more activity needs to be carried out at the team level because this type of collective process is what people will experience in much of their adult lives. In addition, much of this study needs to be supported by people outside the academic system who are in touch with current realities rather than academic theories.

In most cases, this collaborative work should not be designed to teach students answers which are already known. Rather groups should be asked to struggle to resolve a question where multiple responses are possible or, even, when no correct answer is known at all. When this approach is taken, the student no longer struggles to discover the reply they think the teacher wants. Instead they learn that imagination and creativity are qualities which will bring rewards. One of my recurrent dreams throughout my work life has been that we shall involve young people in dealing with real issues. It is exciting to think what could happen if we encouraged students to deal with the current possibilities and problems in their community and give them the credit for doing so.

New forms of evaluation.

There are many forms of competence. One of the tragedies of industrial-era educational systems is that they usually reduce their measurements to a single type of test and assumed that this could determine how valuable a student really is. This is the pattern which forces simplistic models of inferiority and superiority on

others. The tendency to think in terms of top and bottom would be greatly reduced if there was a recognition of the many different ways people can excel.

Bruce Campbell set out the issues in a piece written for *In Context* magazine:

> In recent years, new definitions of intelligence have gained acceptance and have dramatically enhanced the appraisal of human competence. Howard Gardner of Harvard University in his book, *Frames of Mind: the Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, suggests that there at least seven human intelligences, two of which, *verbal/linguistic* intelligence and *logical/mathematical* intelligence, have dominated the traditional pedagogy of western societies.
>
> The five non-traditional intelligences, spatial, musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal, have generally been overlooked in education. However, if we can develop ways to teach and learn by engaging all seven intelligences, we will increase the opportunities for student success and create the opportunity to, in Margaret Mead's words, "weave a social fabric in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place."

There are two fundamental approaches which can be built into educational systems. One of them assumes that it is critically important that every student learn a core curriculum and that if they are failing at one subject in this curriculum they should spend more time on it. This approach is designed to assure that there are no major gaps in an individual's knowledge. The problem is that it concentrates on palliating weakness rather than developing strengths, because most of the time will have to be spent in bringing people up to speed on the topics where they have most difficulty.

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The other approach is to provide the student with a system which permits them to do well at the subjects where their strengths are. Most effort can then be spent developing the student's skill is and making sure that they go as far with their competence as they can. The advantage with this approach is that the student finds out where their commitments are and moves with them. The possible disadvantage is that they will not be compelled to learn some subjects which might be eventually useful to them. If, however, one believes that people tend to make good decisions when they are given responsible freedom, this problem can be overcome by good counselling.

The two models I have described in the last paragraphs are pure models and it is of course necessary to find a point somewhere in between them. But there is no doubt in my mind about where the emphasis must be placed. It is better for students to develop their strengths than to spend their time struggling with subjects where they will fail. Future educational systems should provide people with the learning opportunities which fit their skills and measure their abilities along scales which are appropriate to the type of activities in which they are engaged.

There should also be a major shift in the way we work with those who are unlikely to be interested in academics. At the current time, the pattern is that students are typically taught using the same basic track until they get into middle or high school. Then those who are not "good" enough to go on to college suddenly get shunted onto a vocational or general education track which usually seems like failure to them and to their parents.

We should, on the contrary, provide alternative tracks for students who do not fit the "verbal/linguistic" and "logical/mathematical" styles from the time they are born. Societies must recognize the need for many types of skills. Indeed, I sometimes think there is more danger

that the world will come apart because of a lack of plumbers and electronic engineers than from a shortage of thinkers! I also am more worried about the lack of people who have empathy as compared to those who concentrate on logical analysis.

There are a growing number of tests which can enable parents and children to learn at an early age what types of activities are most appropriate for their young people. These tests are not foolproof, of course, and they should not be used to force a child to take a route which does not seem desirable to him or her. But there will be fewer problems in education if we teach people using the styles which come naturally to them rather than assuming that the book and the lecture are the optimum teaching tool for everybody.

A commitment to providing a relevant education for everybody will also require us to face a very difficult issue. There is now clear-cut evidence that abused children very often turn into abusing parents, and also frequently into criminals. In less extreme cases, children who do not get excited by the potential of learning in their first five years are unlikely to do so when at school.

If the cycle of poverty and abuse is to be broken, young children will need far more support than they currently get from conception to their entry into school. I do not need to stress the complexity of providing this type of support. Bureaucracies are unable to work with the required sensitivity. There will have to be a totally changed approach which can only be developed at the community level.

It is difficult to discuss this topic without falling back into the industrial-era trap which saw the intellectual as bright and everybody else as dumb. But this is exactly the opposite of the point I am making! The problem of our culture is that we have given too much importance to those who can think logically and far too little to those whose thought structures do not fit industrial-era norms. I am proposing that the attitudes

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of not only schools and colleges but also the total culture be changed to mesh with the realities of the compassionate era.

Giving people a chance to learn about their strengths and be comfortable with them will also make them more able to live in the diverse and pluralistic world which is inevitable in the future. All of us are going to have to be able to appreciate people who have styles and customs which seem strange to us. The educational system needs to teach people to appreciate diversity and to enjoy the challenges which come from fundamental difference.

The essential problem with today's schools is that they are homogeneous, bland and boring. Education, like life, should be exciting, surprising and fun. Real learning takes place as people have experiences which are unexpected. The real skill is to stretch students and to challenge them to do a little more than they feel capable of managing not only intellectually but in many other ways.

To the extent that education develops the new styles I have described above, it will prepare people to live in a radically changing world. It will get students to understand that change can be exciting rather than threatening. It will provide people with the skills to manage themselves through the rapids of change rather than being drowned in them. The task of the teacher is to stretch students without breaking them and to get them to grasp the thrill of living for personal growth and development rather than dull security.

In the short run, education for most people will still take place in schools and colleges. In the longer run, more and more education will move back into the community. We shall come to see all of life as a learning process. We shall see ourselves as living in a learning society.

Humanity cannot return to the simpler days when we ignored the broader world in which we lived. We were not responsible for evolution then. Now we are.

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Some critics argue that it is not realistic to educate people as though they could understand broader horizons. I am personally absolutely certain that the essential reason for so many of our failures with young people at the current time is that we underestimate their competence. They are far more capable than we give them credit for being. If we would only treat students as if they were twice as bright as we think they are, I know that half of our educational problems will vanish.

We really have no choice. The model which suggests that the world can be run by a small oligarchy is unrealistic. Either the vast majority of the people of the world learn how to manage their own affairs and be good citizens or the future is very bleak. Fortunately, there are no visible limits to how much people can learn if we provide them with the encouragement to be imaginative rather than require them to do what they are told.

The primary need is for each one of us to learn to balance ourselves in a world which will continue to surprise us. We shall always be knocked off center by events but we need to come back quickly. You may have seen the dolls which have weights in their base so they recover their upright stance when they are pushed to one side or the other. This is the balance model toward which we must strive throughout our lives. In order to be able to live in this way, knowledge will have to be structured in totally new forms.

New Knowledge Structures.

One primary requirement for human survival in the future is little discussed. Wisdom and knowledge must be available to decision-makers in a form which is usable and effective. The same material should be obtainable by citizens in ways which they can grasp as easily and effectively as possible.

One of the most common statements made today about human progress is that information doubles every three or five or seven years! The figure used depends on

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the method of calculation employed by the individual making the announcement. When I hear this statement I am likely to reply that while information may be doubling, there is ample evidence that knowledge is halving and wisdom is being even further reduced in the same time period.

The monopolization of knowledge, and its distortion, are two primary ways people maintain power. If they know something that other individuals and groups do not, they can run rings around them. If they can get their preferred statistics used, rather than those of another group, then they are far ahead of the game.

The way out of the problem we currently face which arises from competing statistics developed on different bases as well as deliberate information distortion, will not be found through a search for objective statistics. Objective statistics cannot be created because we live in a perceptual world. Statistics often hide as much as they reveal and I sympathize with the person who, in a fit of anger, announced that there were lies, damn lies and statistics! It is certainly true that figures are no longer sufficient by themselves to support critical decision-making.

Statistics were the key intellectual tool of the industrial era. They depend, above all, on sampling theory which assumes that it is possible to measure public opinion or industrial production by using data and figures from only a small number of people or firms. Sampling theory is based on one absolute necessity: there must be no systemic biases in choosing what elements of the total universe is sampled. Suppose one wants to measure the total yield of wheat in a field. One will not weigh each ear. Rather, one will choose ears from different parts of the field and this should include the areas of higher and lower production. Thus a good estimate of total production can be made.

Suppose, however, that one wants to measure the level of support for various political candidates. Suppose, in addition, that the poll is conducted by telephone. First,

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the percentage of support for a populist candidate may be far higher among those who do have telephones or who are not home to answer them. Second, those who support populist candidates may well be more afraid and unwilling to tell pollsters their views. Thus support figures may be heavily inaccurate. Several results of this type turned up in the more interesting, and controversial, Congressional races in 1990.

Sampling techniques necessarily break down when the world is diverse. Because the underlying shift away from the industrial era and toward the compassionate era is in terms of moving from uniformity and toward more and more differences, the difficulties with statistical techniques can only increase. I need to stress that the problem is not with particular statistics but with the very theory of sampling which is central to all modern statistical work.

The other problem with current information techniques is that they are still largely geared to a time when the world was largely stable. For example, students are taught using text books which are written as much as five or ten years before they are used. In today's conditions, the speed of change makes material written as little as a year ago obsolete. To grasp this, one has only to look at the change in world events over the last year and the obsolescence of any world affairs text book written before the break-up of the Communist Empire and the invasion of Kuwait.

Given the progressive breakdown of current information systems, there is an urgent need to develop a process which will provide an overview of all the primary issues of the day. These overviews would be produced at a variety of levels of difficulty and in all the available media. Teams would be set up to do this work and they would have the responsibility of stating what the various credible views on a particular topic were.

As I've spent some considerable time dealing with the nature of the education debate in this chapter, I'll stick with this issue. The group(s) dealing with it would

listen to those on all sides. They would then state the arguments made by the proponents of the various positions. They would push and probe in order to discover the extent to which the positions advanced were coherent and consistent. They would then present the viewpoints to decision-makers and the public so that the validity of the various attitudes and proposals could be worked out in an intelligent and creative dialogue.

As I have already stated, there are two primary sides to the education debate. On the one hand, there are those who believe that we need to apply the logic of traditional schooling system strongly and consistently. On the other, many people argue that society should adopt broader educational goals and systems. Despite the fact that there usually are a couple of primary ways of stating an issue, it is critically important that any debate not be stated simplistically along just one continuum. Most people are not "tidy" thinkers. The real need is to provide a sense of the wide range of opinions that exist around the drug issue so that people will feel comfortable about surfacing their own ideas. A colleague of mine, Eugene Martin, has developed this technique to the level of an art form using audiotapes. I call this approach a problem/possibility (p/p) focuser .

There may seem, at first sight, to be a paradox in my supporting the idea of p/p focusers. After all, I have stated my views very clearly and I come down on one side of this issue. Why do I feel it appropriate for time to be spent on creating a balanced picture of various debates which are currently taking place within our culture? The fundamental reason is that I am prepared to believe that I am wrong. If my views are not supported by the evidence, then it is important that I change my position.

My commitment is to the truth and not to my own current view. I am personally delighted when I find somebody who can show me why my views are incorrect and enable me to gain a more accurate picture of reality. Anybody who takes this stance will inevitably support a

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p/p focuser approach. Those who are simply interested in manipulating people so they come to share their own opinion will disapprove of broadening the debate to look at all relevant views.

One of the key aspects of this approach -- using a problem/possibility focuser -- is to make sure that it is available at a number of levels and in various media. Problem/possibility focusers will, of course, be available on line through computers and also in print, video, audio and interactive formats. Another critical requirement is that the arguments in p/p focusers be kept constantly up to date. These documents cannot be written and forgotten. They must reflect the current state of the world. The teams responsible for these documents must stay together and revise as rapidly as is necessary. P/p focusers also need to be written at various decisionmaking scales. The issues an individual needs to consider when thinking about their own opportunities for education are quite different from those which should be considered by those who have the opportunity to change educational systems.

There are two primary questions which have to be considered before we can be sure that the p/p focuser system of ordering knowledge will work. One of them is to decide on the most important questions which need to be considered by decision-makers and citizens. Fortunately this question does not have to be decided centrally. If this form of knowledge structuring becomes dominant, competing p/p focusers on the most important topics will be issued by various groups. Instead of colleges and universities being divided into disciplinary structures as they currently are, more and more of them will be set up in terms of the subject areas to which they pay attention.

The second question which has to be examined is what is a credible viewpoint which deserves to be included in a p/p focuser. Fortunately, this issue will also be resolved idiosyncratically by the many groups which are engaged in the production of p/p focusers. The

logic of the p/p focuser approach, however, is to push forward to an ever-more inclusive vision.

The p/p focuser approach will help recreate the center in politics. Political decision-makers will gain the knowledge and support which will make it easier for them to stand for what is right rather than going along with the special interest groups which so often harass them. Once a p/p focuser which covers all the issues is available, it will be easier to place the ideas of a fringe group in perspective because their place in the total debate about a topic will be less compelling.

The very way our brains are structured makes it easier to cling to past thoughts rather than to accept new ones. The p/p focuser, and other similar techniques, is one of the best potentials we currently have for breaking through the patterns of the past and discussing the potentials of the future.

This brings us full circle. Geoffrey Vickers demanded that society commit itself to ensuring that accurate information be available. I am personally convinced that this will only happen after our educational and our political systems alter. Even more critically, nothing substantial can occur to improve the accuracy of information flows so long as current economic systems are maintained. Our current economic systems are largely responsible for our inability to achieve accurate movement of information.

This material is from *Turning the Century*, by Robert Theobald, 330 Morgan Street, New Orleans, LA 70114.

Robert Theobald, PhD, is an internationally known author, speaker and consultant, and has been working with fundamental change issues for over a quarter of a century. In addition to writing over fifteen books, he has spoken in 49 states and consulted widely for public, voluntary and private organizations wanting to create new directions.

Robert's recommendation of p/p focusers comes out of

extensive experience with own particular p/p group, Action Linkage, with which he has had an extensive and highly successful organizational relationship for many years. A-L is still carrying on on a limited basis after over a decade of cooperative communication and what could be called responsive perspective explorations of a variety of change topics via letter exchanges. Your editor was a member of this group for a number of years.

Robert's book, *The Rapids of Change* ($16.95), written with much cooperative input from members of Action Linkage, and *The Study Guide for the Rapids of Change* ($19.95) can be purchased from The Lorax bookstore, 20 Elm St., Albany, NY 12202. The latter contains, among other things, two excellent "how-to" tapes offering a whole spectrum of suggestions for implementing changes within community.

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POEM BY WILLIAM BLAKE:

The Little Vagabond

Dear Mother, dear Mother, the Church is cold,
But the Ale-house is healthy and pleasant and warm:
Besides I can tell where I am used well,
Such usage in Heaven will never do well.

But if at the Church they would give us some Ale,
And a pleasant fire our souls to regale,
We'd sing and we'd pray all the live-long day,
Nor ever once wish from the Church to stray.

Then the Parson might preach, and drink, and sing,
And we'd all be as happy as birds in the spring:
And modest Dame Lurch, who is always at Church,
Would not have bandy children, nor fasting, nor birch.

And God, like a father rejoicing to see
His children as pleasant and happy as he,
Would have no more quarrel with the Devil or the Barrel,
But kiss him and give him both drink and apparel.

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STUDIES:

DESIGNING ALTERNATIVES FOR SUCCESS:

from the Hofstra University Center for the Study of Educational Alternatives, Hempstead, New York 11550

Evidence to date suggests that each of the following features plays an important part in the success of an alternative school or program. The more of them associated with a program, the better its chances for sustaining success.

° There is a fair degree of freedom from standard district operating procedures .

° Staff choose to be there, rather than being assigned.

° Students choose to be there, rather than being assigned.

° Existing staff have a strong voice in selecting new staff and students.

° The alternative represents a genuine, continuing educational option for its students, rather than a beef-em-up-and-send-em-back operation.

° The program is designed by those who will operate it - its staff- and the staff are also in a position to modify it as conditions warrant.

° The program begins small - with perhaps fewer than 100 students - and a doubled enrollment remains the limit.

° The requisites of coherence and group identification are met: a separate space, and a substantial part of the school day spent together by the alternative's students and staff.

° The alternative school exerts high levels of control over the various features of its programs.

° High levels of teacher autonomy are reflected.

° The most secure programs cost no more than standard programs in the district, in terms of per pupil expenses.

° The alternative begins with a two- or three- year commitment - with an evaluation planned to occur toward the end of that period.

HOW TO KILL THE NEW ALTERNATIVE FROM THE START

Each of the following features reduces the likelihood of success of a new alternative. The more of them found in a program, the more remote the chances for yielding the benefits which alternative education can bring.

° It is designed by administrators, not its staff.

° It is imported from somewhere else and set into operation pretty much intact, as it worked elsewhere.

° The program is a referral program to which students are assigned.

° The alternative is a 'last chance' program which a student must 'choose' in order to avoid suspension or expulsion.

° The program is punitive in orientation.

° The alternative is built around a single cluster of new elements - perhaps a new curriculum or a new set of activities - but holds all other features of school operation intact and unmodified.

° The alternative is treated just as any new department within the school - or new school within the district - might be. It is expected to conform to existing regulations, operating procedures and arrangements.

° Staff are assigned to the alternative by administrators outside it - or by automatic processes such as contract rights.

° The alternative is intended for the "toughest" cases and designed to reflect the absolutely minimal departure from traditional school practice necessary to accommodating them.

° No one in the district is told very much about the new program - and guidance counselors are left to remain lukewarm to negative about it.

REPRINTS:

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY:

TABULA RASA OR RESERVOIR

by John Maryanopolis

We have to take a new philosophical view of education. We must reject John Locke's powerful view of the *Tabula Rasa* for another view. We must see ourselves as teachers responsible for tapping the reservoir of the mind. We should act on the assumption the talent is already there. This assumption, as opposed to the blank slate assumption, changes the way we teach. What if we see the role of the teacher to "draw out" as opposed to "implant?" Reservoir versus blank slate - draw out versus implant.

If we have a blank slate on which to write, we can divide education into segments allowing departmentalize education to the extreme point where we create a physical plant with halls used to separate curricula. There is the English section of the building, the science section, the foreign language section, the mathematics section, etc. The departmentalization has reached such a degree that students become upset if a teacher corrects a spelling error in a mathematics class or teaches a scientific point in an English class. They will argue against the "cross-over" teaching, using the system we have created to defend their argument.

If we adopt the philosophical position that we have a reservoir to tap, we start with an integrated system. A system created from the understanding that science is language and language is mathematics and mathematics is art and art is history and each of these is an integral part of society. If our function as teachers is to draw out the resources in the reservoir of the mind, we are inhibited when we attempt to departmentalize education. We now start with an understanding that the raw talent is already in the mind of the

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student/child/human.

With this philosophical paradigm shift as a backbone to our teaching methodology, we easily create educational programs that address the concerns of integrating the student's talent with the teacher's talent. We now produce programs that integrate the arts, the sciences, the sociologies. Once we start to design an integrated program for students we are confronted with our own teaching method of the blank slate and know we must change methodology.

We are now forced to approach students from the point of view of reservoir. We are forced to see that all students/children/humans have a talent that can contribute to the whole program. The students with writing talent can aid the students with science talent and the students with physical talent can aid the students with design talent, etc. Suddenly! every student has potential worth and can contribute to the success of the program. Suddenly! everyone is potentially gifted. Suddenly! our job is to draw out the gift in each student. We no longer have to deal with the political or psychological problem of identifying the gifted learner. We let them identify their own talents and we nurture them. We can escape John Schumacher's problem of "The right to learn versus the right to teach, or the right to grow versus the right to raise."

Rather than "implant" godlike on blank slates, our role as teachers is to draw out students' talents, to tap a resource, to guide them towards self-reliance.

John Maryanopolis is an unconventional and highly creative employee of the New York State Department of Education, a governmental agency which was once one of the most enlightened educational establishments in the country - or so your editor believed. Like so many such official governmental bodies, however, this quality of mind and spirit has virtually vanished from NYSED, and a man like John stands out like a sore thumb amid a crowd of politicos. Let us hope he hangs in, keeps his job *and* his integrity in a difficult pressure cooker world! We need him and his ilk!

REPRINTS:

WHEN SOCRATES MEETS FERRIS BUELLER

by Jim Tortorici
Teacher Shenendehowa School District
of New York State

When Enlightenment philosophers began talking about social equity and individual worth, they envisioned more than new political structures. At bottom, writers like Voltaire, Locke and Rousseau described an entirely new relationship between every form of authority and all individuals. Beyond political enfranchisement, 18th century democracy proclaimed a kind of personal empowerment which even ancient Athenians only glimpsed.

Practice, however, doesn't always follow theory, In America, where political freedom has been taken for granted since 1787, it was not until the 1960's that a culture-wide effort was made to reconcile the difference between Constitutional promises of personal dignity and autocratic attitudes which have always dominated the workplace.

For the first time, feminists achieved some consistent success in their struggle to overcome sexual stereotypes and on-the-job harassment. The Civil Rights movement transformed the phrase "equal opportunity employer" from legal fiction to a greater workplace reality. In such a context, then, contemporary demands for education reform may be seen as the latest chapter in an ongoing effort to eradicate dictatorial attitudes that have survived since the 18th century.

While precise dimensions of reform are still developing, some things are already clear. First, unless teachers find ways to share reform benefits with students, the teachers may be no different from 19th century bosses who proclaimed all people free in theory while denying even simple dignities in practice. To be specific, hierarchical systems of school governance continue to foster daily erosion of student and teacher

self-esteem because of an unbalanced view that promotes knowledge as a tool for dominance and evaluates success in terms of an ability to dominate others.

Further, in too many schools, learning is viewed as nothing more than behavioral change which can be described according to some statistical mean. The deeper, more subtle possibility that learning may be rooted in a natural, ongoing conversation among equals is never even considered. And so, another key to developing both teacher and student empowerment lies in rediscovering Socratic-like relationships based on the premise that all learning is ultimately a partnership of inquiry into the experience of being human.

Nineteenth century industrial "leaders" assumed for themselves both political freedom and the personal dignity which such freedom implies. For the most part, however, they never extended the same privileges to workers. Instead, bosses ruled over company towns where, from mansion to rowhouse, even architecture reflected a sense of hierarchical governance which any European monarch might have readily endorsed. Although by the 1930's trade unions achieved major social and legal reform, only recently has the success of "quality control circles" and "walk-away management" begun to expose the demoralizing inadequacies of a layered approach to industrial and corporate governance.

As education reform writers point out, American schools tend to follow the factory model. An absolute authority at top is supported by a descending hierarchy in which each level defers to those above but subdues those below.

As a result, the typical model of school governance devastates self-esteem in both teacher and student. Rather than cultivating a child's natural tendency to critical analysis, management by hierarchy inevitably supports an approach to learning that views school as a training ground and children as raw material to be

shaped according to a pre-set value structure called curriculum.

Tremendous teenage support for *The Breakfast Club* and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* is rooted in more than a slick combination of pretty faces and provocative dialogue. In its own way, each film carefully articulates the intense alienation so many students experience each time they set foot inside of a school. And by the end, each film clearly describes the frustration, confusion and, finally, the hope of students who refuse to believe that learning and human life involve nothing more than the gratuitous exercise of authority.

A Socratically oriented concept of learning would not lead to an abandonment of reading, math, writing and computer skills, necessary to test their personal views against the judgment provided by peers, teachers, parents and prospective employers.

For all of its promise, education reform is by no means a *fait accompli*. Indeed, a century's worth of abuse and often callous disregard have generated a protective cynicism that prompts many teachers to view the reform movement as just another fad. Yet, unless those who have grown complacent in servitude dare to relearn the ways of responsibility, reform will fail. For in the end, education reform is a call to be free, and the acceptance of freedom always comes down to a matter of personal choice.

This article by a teacher from a school district near Albany comes to ΣΚΟΑΕ courtesy of John Maryanopolis, the author of the article preceding this one.

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PROFILED SCHOOLS:

Note: It seemed worthwhile including the description of The Free School in Albany, New York, even though our school was recently profiled in past issues, since Keiko-san is presenting her own images of what we do to the Japanese reading public, a subject of potential value to Americans as well.

THE FREE SCHOOL AND THE PLANET SCHOOL
by Keiko-san Yamashita, Kyoto, Japan

The Free School

The Free School in Albany, New York, is located in the old part of the city. It could be called a homeschool; that is its feeling tone. Mary, its founder, has both creative energy and a strong will.

The school originated in the actual needs of the everyday life of people. Mary told us that the on-going life of a school is based on an artistic attitude toward life coupled with an accompanying sense of the potentialities involved in immediacy.

The school includes many activities:

1. A family birth center
2. A natural foods store
3. A small publishing business
4. Participation in the peace movement
5. A meditation class
6. Rainbow Camp
7. Its own internal economy

In the beginning, the children involved were Mary's son and three other children whose families supported the children's own bad feelings about their experiences in public school. And so, the school began in Mary's house. A representative from the public school told them to return the children to public school, but the parents did not wish to comply.

When Mary's family began to object to the school's use of their house, they found a new place.

Over the years of the school's existence there have been many problems to be solved in order for it to continue, and everyone involved has worked very hard, put a great deal of deep thinking into problem- solving, and has learned the importance of encouraging one another.

They first acquired an old school building in downtown

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Albany very inexpensively, and then several more old buildings, also for very little money, since the entire area was in decline and was lived in only by the very poor. They fixed up the old buildings and began renting out apartments.

The first floor of the school itself consists of elementary classrooms; the second floor is play nursery, a large meeting room and the kitchen. The children's parents built a jungle gym playground in the back yard. The members of the school community live near the school.

The school itself has never sought out people to hire as teachers. It has a free breakfast program for poor children.

Mary told us [at a Kyoto gathering in January, 1991, of Japanese families and teachers interested in alternative education at which Chris Mercogliano and I spoke about our school and our philosophy of education] that children need good, well-prepared, warm food in order to develop the habits and attitudes of good health and well-being.

The school also functions as a community center; as participants in the life of the community, the children have an opportunity to learn about the actual problems that exist in the world around them. For example, in the last two years the children became actively involved in

- a New York state issue involving the release of a native American man from extradition proceedings back to North Carolina;
- a project in Puerto Rica helping to rebuild houses destroyed by hurricane Hugo on Vieques Island.
- an environmental activist action protesting [successfully!] a municipal proposal to build a new power plant across the river from the school.

When I [Keiko-san] visited the school, I saw a poster on a classroom wall protesting racial discrimination, from seeing which I formed a sense of the school's atmosphere of teaching the children about the world.

The Planet (Wakusei) School

The Planet School [Keiko-san's school in Kyoto] is a place where the issue of war is discussed every day. It is true that everyone is against war, but we believe the real question to be addressed is how we achieve the state of peace. This is what I would like to speak about.

There are many ways of looking at this question. Recently, we - the five or six children who come to the school and our teachers - began realizing something important about how this

may be taught. We go out to play near a hill every day, and this day, on returning, we talked together about the question of peacefulness and saw that when the children are playing there, they aren't fighting. This fact seemed unaccountable to us until we also saw that it is when the children have become totally absorbed in their game on the hill, there is no fighting. When their bodies are surrounded by the natural environment, they have peaceful feelings.

The Wakusei [Planet] School has developed a plan for taking this learning out into the world. We climb the hill and invite people to come and teach the children on Tuesdays and Fridays. We have found that if you teach the children that anyone is welcome to visit our school, they have to be more aware of themselves as individuals. The adults, for their part, can see that the children are full of life, and are also thinking and acting to understand our problem of peace and war. One of our teachers explained, "Although they are children, they are busy thinking about this, the most important problem we have, and working to understand it in terms of the facts of history."

And so, I hope that this study will help them to grow up living close to life itself. Mary told us that life always flows like a river. What we do is not difficult. We only have to realize who we are as human beings and to live a life of truthfulness and honesty.

Keiko-san Yamashita herself is a beautiful person who embodies and lives her own philosophy. Her children are truly fortunate to be a part of her beautiful life energy! In the Summer issue of ΣΚΟΑΕ, we published an interview with her which described some of the background of this most creative and talented person, and Chris Mercogliano wrote up an account of our January gathering.

This account, copied from an article by her in a Japanese publication, was sent to us by Keiko-san and translated by Hiromi Ota, a Japanese interne at The Free School during the second half of 1991.

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REPRINTS:
(in this case, a reprint of a reprint! See BOOK REVIEW section for context)

A SUMMARY OF THE THEORY OF ORGANIC THINKING, as explained in the words of its first theoretician, Max Kadushin

Social values or ideals cannot be coordinated into a logical system. Whenever this has been attempted, religion has been constricted into dogmas and ethics hardened into the rules of the doctrinaire. Logic has its rightful place, to be sure, in these enterprises of the human mind and spirit, but when it seeks to lay the foundations of conduct its efforts are futile when they are not harmful. A well-ordered, logical, hence uniform, system negates that very complexity which is the chief characteristic of human motives and conduct. It takes no account of the differences between individuals, nor of the uniqueness of every ethical situation. In short, it runs counter to all the forces and factors that make the human scene human.

Every historic group possesses its own distinctive traditions, every individual his own peculiar character, every ethical situation its own unique quality. If no order whatsoever inhered within such variety, then any attempt to study human institutions were foredoomed lo failure. On the other hand, should we impose a logical order upon these institutions, then the variety which distinguishes them disappears from view. Is there no alternative here between chaos and logic? ... I believe that there is an alternative; and that in discovering it we come upon an articulation of thought and values more complicated than that which can be devised by logic, complicated and flexible enough, indeed, to allow for both the variety of mankind's traditions and the distinctive-ness of the individual's character. ... This type of thinking, ... is universal. whilst local in content and individualistic in configuration. It is not logical but

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organismic: Each organismic pattern of thought or organic complex has its own distinctive individuality, -- each social pattern and each individual variation of it.

To attempt to define exactly the scope of the sphere of value and conduct is to attempt an impossible task. It includes all social relationships, to be sure, but also much more than that. Man's attitude toward the earth from which he draws his sustenance, toward the animals, toward the very skills with which he is endowed are to be included in the scope of value and conduct. ...In fact one may say that under certain circumstances almost anything may fall within that scope. Yet that does not mean that the valuational life is chaotic, formless. Whatever the particular instance in question may be, it is always subsumed under a generalizing concept, and all such concepts are organically related to one another.

The valuational life, it must be noted, is not "raw experience". ... Indeed, either experience is made significant by a generalization, a concept of some kind, or else what happens does not register at all. Without concepts which organize and interpret, the concrete, daily life of man would be without variation whatsoever and could hardly be characterized as human. There would certainly be no difference, for example, between the giving of short and of honest weight if there were no concept of honesty, and without the concept of kindness such action as giving bread to the hungry would bear no significance or value, even granting that it were possible. If the impression nevertheless persists that the valuational life especially is composed of "raw experience", that impression can be ascribed to the pervasive qualities of the concepts themselves. Concreteness ... is one of the prime characteristics of the organic complex of concepts and ... with this concreteness is associated the effortlessness of organic thinking. This is another way of saying that we take the organic concepts for granted.

All the organic concepts ... are integrated with one

another. inextricably intertwined with each other. Every organic concept possesses its own individuality and cannot be inferred from any other concept. ... And, finally, the individuality of the organic concepts and the process of the integration of the organic complex as a whole are not separable; in other words, the *wholeness* of the organic complex and the *particularity* of the individual organic concept are mutually interdependent. Our definition, then, would be: Organic concepts are concepts in a whole complex of concepts none of which can be inferred from the others but all of which are so mutually interrelated that every individual concept, though possessing its own distinctive features, nevertheless depends for its character on the character of the complex as a whole which, in turn, depends on the character of the individual concepts.

Each organic concept, therefore, implicates the whole complex without being completely descriptive of the complex, retaining, at the same time, its own distinctive features... .

The general characteristics of the organic complex are the characteristics of the valuational life in general. Let us proceed to take up these general characteristics one by one.

1. The Concretization of the Concept: ... There *is* a continuous process of the concretization of the concept. We must always remember that we are dealing here with facts of moment-to-moment experience; hence, as the concept is concretized the facts of experience take on meaning thus given them by the concept, are colored by the concept, and to that extent are determined by the concept.... Being concrete situations, they need not always be *explicitly* characterized by the concepts which illumine them with significance or meaning. Even when organic concepts are but implicit or imbedded in events, situations, attitudes, facts, the latter are nonetheless seen to be concretizations of the concepts. ... The organic concepts, then, are continually applied to

the constant stream of experience. They canalize that stream, or, to drop the figure, they continually interpret or determine the facts, give meaning to them. Since values lend meaning and significance to life, we have one reason why organic concepts are values.

But life is not one high splendid level of significance, and there are times when the continuity of the process of the concretization of the concept is broken. And here another quality of the organic concept asserts itself. Every concept is possessed of a *drive* toward concretization. By that, of course we mean that individuals with whom such concepts are habitual are not passive but strive always to concretize the concept afresh. ...Values are *active* ideals, continuously striving for fulfillment. ...

The individual is *aware* of the organic concept. The process of the concretization of the concept is not altogether inevitable, may at times be broken. On such occasions, the individual is made highly aware of the concept that finally determines the situation in question. In this respect, the organic concepts are to be distinguished from the categories of Aristotle, the concretization of the latter being so completely inevitable, the category so infallibly bound up with the concrete fact that the individual in his ordinary day-to-day existence is entirely unaware of the categories he must perforce employ. It was, indeed, this distinction between the organic concepts and the Aristotelian categories that prevented us from designating the former as categories. ... Though organic concepts are habitual because they continually impart meaning to things, are continually being concretized, they are not *merely* habitual or mechanical.

Though the organic concepts do not possess the automatic character of the Aristotelian categories, they are not entirely subject to free choice, either. True enough, there is room for choice as to which organic concept shall determine a particular fact or phenomenon -- but the choice lies within the orbit of the organic complex and does not apply to a concept outside

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of it. The process of the concretization of the organic concept is a constant one and there is no one moment, ordinarily, when the individual can, by main might, stop the process, drive and all, and insert a new concept up to that moment foreign to his experience. Isolated as he may be at that moment, his reactions to things continue and those reactions are determined by the organic concepts he has always held.

Similarly, there is no such thing as suspended judgment with regard to the organic concepts. There can be no waiting for sufficient facts to accumulate in order to classify them properly, as is the procedure in science. The phenomena of experience within the scope of the valuational life have meaning immediately or else do not register at all. Organic concepts can therefore not be directly produced by experimentation. Our conclusion is, then, that although the individual is highly aware of the organic concepts or values the latter are not completely subject to free choice.

If we take into account the process of the concretization of the concept and the organic character of the complex of concepts, we shall understand why [an organic complex] does not offer formal definitions of its concepts. A formal definition of a concept is a general statement, abstracted from particular instances, which enables us to recognize new instances that can be subsumed under the concept, and which allows us to relate the concept to other concepts within some coordinated system. Now, in [an organic complex] these functions are performed without formal definitions. By means of the process of the concretization of the concept new facts or instances are continually being subsumed or determined. And in the organic complex all concepts are integrally related to one another. ...

The phenomena of the valuational life are usually interpreted immediately as they occur else they give no meaning at all. We cannot have, as we have said, suspended judgment with regard to the organic concepts. The truth is that we are dealing here with an

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aspect of life that is both spontaneous and infinitely varied in shadings, an aspect of life therefore hardly to be confined within the fixed boundaries of formal definitions. Only organic concepts are adequate for such phenomena. We can go so far as to say, then, that values cannot be adequately summed up in general, formal definitions. ...

2. *Combination of Concepts:* A number of concepts are usually involved at once in any single concrete situation. That is to say, any single concrete situation does not, as a rule, involve the concretization of merely a single organic concept but that of several concepts at once. ...

The significance that inheres in the situations that make up day-to-day experience depends, then, for its richness, on the range of the organic complex of concepts involved. An organic complex containing a large number of concepts will grasp or interpret a concrete situation in more ways than will a complex with a small number of concepts. The greater effectiveness of the larger complex does not stop there, however. Because of the drive toward concretization, every organic complex creates new situations, new events informed by combinations of concepts, but the larger complex carves out a world beyond grasp of the smaller. For the individual with a large organic complex, therefore, day-to-day experience contains situations, yields significances, of which the man with a small organic complex is absolutely unaware. ...

The organic relation between the concepts, we can now see, is no mere vagary of the valuational life. Concrete situations are grasped not by one but by a number of concepts at once. For any given situation *as a whole* to be meaningful there must, of course, be some kind of coherence between the concepts, but were that coherence to be of the inferential order, the situation would become apparent to the individual in a piecemeal fashion. The concrete situation is grasped as a whole

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because the coherence between the concepts in interpreting it is organic and not logical or inferential.

3. Potential Simultaneity of Concepts: What makes it possible for a number of organic concepts to grasp any given situation at once is the potential simultaneity of the organic concepts. It is as if the whole complex were constantly trigger-point, ready to pour forth *all* its concepts on any occasion or situation. In saying this we are saying no more than that the complex is organic, of one piece. Each situation has focussed upon it the whole organic complex, and the concepts that are concretized in that situation represent the maximum possible concretization of the whole organic complex. The concepts not concretized or actualized in that situation are not totally irrelevant to the situation for they have the status of concepts that were potentially relevant. This conforms to the conclusion reached above that each organic concept implicates the whole complex. Organic concepts or values, then, possess the characteristic of potential simultaneity.

The simultaneity of the organic concepts is potential and not actual. For the concretization of the whole complex is always limited by two factors -- the temperament or mood of the individual and the circumstances in which the individual is placed. ...

The potential simultaneity of concepts means that the whole complex is brought into play upon every situation.... There is nothing static about the way in which the organic concepts function because every change in circumstances brings with it new concretizations of the concepts. More, the concepts are dynamic drives actually creating new situations. If by experiential concepts we mean concepts which correspond completely with actual experience, then organic concepts or values are *experiential concepts*.

The potential simultaneity of concepts also means that organic concepts or values are connotative of one another. Aside from the concepts involved explicitly in

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any given situation, all the rest which were potentially involved are implicit in varying degrees. Those concepts which share the same ground as the concept concretized are immediately connoted, forming, as it were, a circle about that concept, with the rest of the concepts of the complex as a penumbra.... In addition to these inner circles, the penumbra of the remainder of the concepts lends further shades of meaning to the concept concretized. For it takes but a little change in the situation to render any of the implicit concepts explicit. Connotation does not involve that step-by-step effortful reasoning characteristic of logical or inferential thinking; hence, organic thinking is *effortless.*

4. The Element of Paradox: Because a situation is determined by several concepts at once, paradoxes occur is organic thinking not infrequently. The simultaneity of the concepts is limited, to be sure, but the limitation is the result of other factors, not that of logical antithesis.... We are dealing, then, with things that are logically contradictory but psychologically correct, with interpretations of paradoxical character because a situation may be determined by several organic concepts at once.

5. The Fluid Character of the Complex: One of the factors limiting the simultaneity of the concepts is the temperament or mood of the individual. The same situation, therefore, may be interpreted or determined by different concepts, according to the temperaments of different individuals and even according to the different moods of the same individual. Such differences are especially marked when the same or a similar situation is determined at one time by one fundamental concept and at another time by another fundamental concept. ...

The other factor limiting the simultaneity of the concepts consists of the circumstances or situations in which the individual is placed. Obviously, no sharp line can be drawn between this and the factor just discussed,

for the individual's temperament both affects his circumstances and is itself affected by them. Nevertheless, there are many instances where we can see how circumstances directly influence the choice of the determining concepts.... The fluid character of the complex permits of great variety in the concretization of the concepts, depending on the circumstances and the historical epochs.

The two factors limiting the simultaneity of the concepts render it inevitable for every individual to have a configuration of the complex all his own. The circumstances of the lives of no two men are identical, and neither are their temperaments. With the circumstances of an individual limiting the concretization of the concepts in a peculiar and original way and his temperament responding to the circumstances in a like manner, the combination of concepts determining similar situations will likewise be original and tend to be consistent. The result will be a fairly consistent and original configuration of the complex as it is brought into play in the moment-to-moment life of the individual. ...

6. *The Aspect of Inevitability*:... Though the process of concretization is continuous, the concretization of any one concept is inevitable. This dual character can be observed both when the concepts interpret situations or events and when they act as drives in creating new events....

This dual character of the complex affecting as it did a wide range of concepts, made it possible for the individual not only to have an inward life but one wherein intensity of emotion blended with richness of conceptual content. Since the process of concretization was continuous, the experience of the individual was never chaotic but subsumed under a wide variety of concepts. But the concretization of any one concept was never inevitable, never infallible. In a degree however slight, the concretization of any particular concept was

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always voluntary. There was always a moment of awareness in which the choice was made. And when action was involved or when the internal or external opposition was great, awareness became acute, and the concretization of the concept charged with profound emotion.... Organic concepts or values are, therefore, charged with emotion.

Our conclusion is, then, that the organic complex as a whole is inevitable in the sense that some concept must be concretized, but that the concretization of any particular concept or value is not inevitable. The lack of complete inevitability should not be taken, however, as a flaw in the functioning of the organic complex. On the contrary, the fact that the concretization of any particular concept is not inevitable, and hence not predictable, introduces the factors of novelty and change which inhere in the very constitution of an organism. These factors mark off the organismic from the mechanistic.

By allowing for individual configurations, the organic complex enabled the individual to have a valuational life of his own and yet live in spiritual cooperation and harmony with other individuals. Now, no individual can possibly manage the circumstances confronting him, interpreted though these be by means of the organic complex, without some modicum of logical or inferential thinking. At the very least he must employ the Aristotelian categories to the extent demanded by the common-sense grasp of things. Hence, when wide scope is given for individuality, wide scope is also given for logical or inferential thought. The organic complex . . . provides the living, subtle, flexible framework for inferential reasoning of a very rigorous order.

[The above has been excerpted from Max Kadushin, *Organic Thinking* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1938), pp. v-vi, and pp. 179-202.]

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EARTHWATCH:

THE PROPER APPROACH TO POLLUTION

FOR WANT OF A NAIL ... **Ben Franklin**

For want of a nail, the shoe was lost ...
For want of a shoe, the horse was lost ...
For want of a horse, the rider was lost.

Let us not make our descendents say:
For want of principle, human health was lost

by Dr. John W Goffman
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As the environmental movement worldwide gains strength, it is appropriate to consider certain lessons - of great importance to the entire movement - which can be uniquely illuminated by the nuclear energy controversy.

The Burden of Proof

Industrialization and the introduction of popular consumer items, like cars and radios, has proceeded apace. It has been a long time before it became evident that serious thought should be given to the injection into the environment of legions of physical, chemical and agricultural pollutants like radiation, asbestos, lead, mercury, pesticides, dioxin, CFCs and more ...

As concern about pollution (i.e., dumping) began to grow, the response with respect to each type of pollutant was: "Show us the harm before you ask us to restrict anything." For instance, lead from leaded gasoline was spread everywhere before there was irrefutable evidence of its damage to the central nervous system, the kidneys, etc. Recently, long term effects are increasingly being observed even with lead levels much lower than previously believed to be harmful.

Back to the Caves

Strongly resisting the environmental awareness

in the public today is a very influential crowd representing the "Special Interests" who say that there is no need to waste resources preventing environmental pollution by any agent whose harm is not yet proven. They insist that the burden of proof is on those who claim such measures are necessary. Citing "scientific uncertainties" they come close to denying that pollution hurts anything at all, especially *human health.*

At the same time they also warn that if the so-called environmental extremists were to prevail, the result would be disaster for everyone. There would be lower standards of living, unemployment, an end to progress, and perpetual poverty for the Third World. And while saying all this they try to pin the label "alarmist" on the environmentalists. These accusations are often accompanied by a non-sequitur: Life expectancy is longer than in the past.

Well, certainly life expectancy *should* be longer. After decades of progress in sanitation and in controlling infectious diseases, if life expectancy were still the same, it would mean that these advances in health were just barely able to balance new forces which were tending to shorten life expectancy. Moreover, it is a mistake to regard good health and longer life expectancy as one and the same thing.

So, the central question is: What is the proper approach to pollution in the absence of solid health data on toxicity and possible safe doses, for each of the 10,000 or more different pollutants and their interactions.

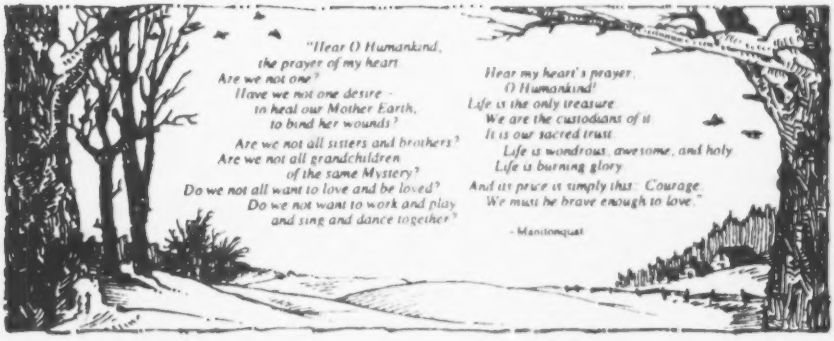
No Dumping Principle

No one has any right whatever to dump any industrial or personal waste products into any part of the commons or into any kind of personal property. The principle does not require demonstration of potential harm from such dumping.

Where might we be now, if the no-dumping principle had been in full force 100 years ago?

Industry's development would have occurred

along totally different lines. Industrial processes would have been designed to produce as little waste as possible, and with respect to unwelcome by-products which were unavoidable, the expected operating status would have been full containment. An ethic would have developed by now in the public, where severe disdain would prevail toward those who have treated others with contempt by dumping on them. Motorists would not be claiming the pseudo-right to choose fuel-inefficient, high-polluting automobiles. Smokers would never have claimed the pseudo-right to make others tolerate their smoke. The shame of using other humans as experimental guinea-pigs would be well understood. Behavior would be kinder in many ways.


"Hear O Humankind,
the prayer of my heart.
Are we not one?
Have we not one desire -
to heal our Mother Earth,
to bind her wounds?
Are we not all sisters and brothers?
Are we not all grandchildren
of the same Mystery?
Do we not all want to love and be loved?
Do we not want to work and play,
and sing and dance together?
Hear my heart's prayer,
O Humankind!
Life is the only treasure.
We are the custodians of it.
It is our sacred trust.
Life is wondrous, awesome, and holy.
Life is burning glory.
And its price is simply this: Courage.
We must be brave enough to love."
- Manitonquat

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The Reign of the "Prove Harm" Rule

In the absence of the no-dumping principle, the "prove harm" rule dominates worldwide. Therefore, it is important to consider the consequences for human health of continuing under that rule. Nuclear energy history illustrates in a classic fashion what actually happens.

Inevitably, every polluter will suggest that (1) his pollutant is harmless, below some "threshold" dose, and (2) a small amount of substance which is harmful at high doses (e.g. aspirin, trace minerals) may be good for people at low doses... so each pollutant must be examined for possible beneficial effects on the public at large. (The technical jargon indicating possible benefits is "hormesis".) Every industry must hope that some "pioneer" polluter will make a plausible case for a threshold or for hormesis. And the idea is attractive to the public too. We all WANT to believe that harm is absent or doubtful from each additional thing that is dumped on us.

Secondly, a small group of vested interests, working for a benefit which is concentrated upon themselves, can almost always prevail over the vastly larger number of people who will pay the diffused costs. The general public puts up with paying for subsidies, tariffs, organized crime... and pollution... because each individual regards his direct cost of submission to be lower than his direct cost of resistance, on each of the thousands of separate issues -- especially when it is likely that the system is biased in favour of the special interests.

The "prove harm" rule is inherently unfair to the victims of pollution. It forces them to pay once as taxpayers for information they distrust from government funded research and pay again for information they distrust (in the form of tax write-offs) for polluter-funded research and pay yet a third time directly for information they *can* trust.

No matter what the public can show scientifically

- even millions of *deaths* -the denial syndrome is powerful. When it comes to cancer from radiation, for instance, the model for some of the responses seems to be the Flat Earth Society. And lastly, it turns out, that the proof of harm is not good enough *anyway*. Then the argument begins over how much is too much. It is true that the million extra cancers from Chernobyl will occur gradually over 75 years or so and will *not* be detectable in the vital statistics. But not being detectable does not mean that they would be absent. Under the "prove harm" ethic, any health effect which conclusively fails to show up in the vital statistics is considered as "inconsequential." I can not regard giving cancer to a million people a negligible crime, but that is where the "prove harm" rule leads one to.

A brief review of events will make it self-evident how the radiation issue provides a giant warning, with respect to handling other additional pollutants.

Lessons from 1969-1979

While nuclear power was still in its infancy, its promoters said that, in the absence of hard evidence, they were going to act "prudently" and assume that ionizing radiation is harmful in proportion to the dose, right down to the lowest possible dose. This is the "no-threshold" and "linear model of dose vs. response," and it was still the official position with respect to radiation in 1972. Indeed, thanks to citizen pressure in those years, the government drastically reduced "permissible levels" of dumping by the nuclear industry, and those reductions may have saved millions of people from radiation-induced cancer.

But all this happened before the nuclear industry realized how costly and difficult it would be to contain its radioactive by-products. Ever since the mid-1970s, a campaign has been conducted to convince the public that radioactive pollution is not worth bothering about.

For instance, every time a leak or spill occurred into the environment, there were claims that the release

was below the level where any injury to public health would occur. The fact that these claims are unsupported by any evidence and are also in direct conflict with the "no-threshold" position and are thus irresponsible, is not the point. The point is that the claims are made again and again, nonetheless.

Soon we heard nuclear polluters saying at every occasion, "It is doubtful that anyone at all has been injured by the nuclear power industry. Show me *one* member of the public whose cancer was proved to be due to radiation." Since no cancer carries an identity tag telling us its cause, no particular case can ever be proven beyond reasonable doubt to be the radiation caused cancer. Similarly, no particular case of lung cancer can ever be proven beyond reasonable doubt to have been caused by smoking. Yet, in both cases definite proof exists for cancer induction, and it comes from careful study of groups. The lesson: Introduction of confusion is inevitable under the "prove harm" rule.

Lessons from 1979-1989

After the Three Mile Island accident in 1979, despite public denials the nuclear promoters realized that major releases of radioactivity were a real possibility in future accidents. It seemed obvious to me at the time that a full reversal of the no threshold linear dose response theory was needed for the health of this industry. And lo and behold, two of the leading radiation committees published reports in 1980 in which they discarded linear dose response and claimed that cancer risk per unit dose is much *less* at low doses than at high doses. As for a threshold, the idea was revived by the statement, that there was "uncertainty as to whether a dose of say 1 rad would have any effect at all." (BEIR-3 report p.193) This 1980 reversal occurred *in spite of* the strong human evidence accumulated since 1972 that the cancer hazard was probably *worse* per unit of dose at low doses than at high doses. Records show that the radiation committees were fully aware of the fact that

the human data did not support their action in claiming the opposite.

The important lesson is the same in any case: Those who plan to defeat pollution under the "prove harm" rule are going to find that proof makes no difference. Because the stronger the evidence supporting toxicity in humans, the more attention and support will be concentrated on the idea of some safe dose and some speculative low-dose benefits. For instance by 1985, a campaign was underway to present "possible beneficial effects" from low-dose ionizing radiation as a reputable hypothesis. A conference on "radiation hormesis" was organized. No benefits showed up ... which was all the more reason for *intensifying* the search.

Lessons from 1987-1989

The Chernobyl accident was the Waterloo of the nuclear power industry. The resulting fallout will give cancer to about a million people if one uses my estimates of risk per rad and no threshold. Using the same dose estimates, but using the underestimates of risk per rad prepared in 1980, the radiation community produced much smaller estimates of cancers than mine. But the accident was so enormous that even the underestimates produced figures like 14,000 to 75,000 extra cancer fatalities. The response? Referring to its own 1987 estimate of 28,000 cancer fatalities, the U.S. Department of Energy stated that the number is "negligible" compared with spontaneous cancer deaths (DOE 1987, p.xiii).

Even my own estimate of a *million* extra cancers (half of them fatal) is a small number compared with the number which will occur anyway, but of what relevance is the comparison? If "perspective" is the issue, why not remind people that all mayhem and murder and wars are just trivial killers compared with the *natural* death rate (which is 100 percent).

This repeated statement that extra deaths constitute a very small increment over the natural

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background constitute the other big warning from the radiation controversy to the environmental movement in general. If you prove harm, you will end up arguing over how *much* killing can be inflicted with impunity. Once premeditated random murder by polluters receives legal approval, and is also accepted as an ethical norm by the environmental movement, more than the *physical* health of humans is in peril.

By the time the 1987 DOE report was abbreviated in the journal *Science* (Dec.16, 1988), the number of fatal cancers had been reduced from 28,000 to 17,400. Prominently displayed next to the number 17,400 was the number 513,000,000 - the number of spontaneous cancer fatalities expected in the entire Northern Hemisphere during the same decades. Now even 17,400 deaths from a single accident is not a pretty picture. So, seven times in just six pages the report claims that exposure from the accident may cause *no* extra deaths at all. The President of the Health Physics Society has gone even further in promoting the safe-dose idea, by suggesting that very low doses should not even be *considered* in estimating risks from radiation. Meanwhile, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission *behaves* as if there were a safe dose by proposing that some nuclear waste is "below regulatory concern" and can go directly into dumps.

All this is happening concurrently with new evidence from the atomic-bomb survivors which confirms that (A) the risk-per-rad is much higher than estimates used by the radiation community and (B) the risk-per-rad is *not* lower when the total dose is low - the risk is probably higher. In 1987 and 1988, not one but TWO groups of analysts within the radiation community have confirmed such findings.

In the face of mounting evidence to the contrary it is wondrous to behold how some people can maintain their faith that the waste they produce will be a *boon* to humanity. This faith is strongest when needed most: After Chernobyl and after revelations of radioactive messes around DOE facilities. The power of faith is a

marvel, for suddenly speculation about possible benefits from nuclear pollution has started to show up everywhere, as needed. If you don't believe this is happening, check the journals - *Science* (August 11, 1989), *Health Physics* (May 1987), *Lancet* (August 26, 1989 p. 518) or *National Geographic* (April 1989, p. 411). The Dept. of Energy and the Electric Power Research Institute are major sponsors of research and conferences on possible benefits.

The Original Question

Our original question was: What is the proper approach to pollution in the *absence* of solid health data on toxicity and possible safe doses for each of the 10,000 pollutants?

Yet the events described here are occurring in a field where solid health data are *present*, both on the magnitude of cancer risk and on the absence of threshold. Indeed, it is unlikely that there will ever be comparably definitive human evidence for any other pollutant on such questions. The reason is that ionizing radiation is unique in several ways. For instance, in this field we do not need to rely on possibly irrelevant, and therefore eternally inconclusive, data from other species or cell studies. Extensive human data already exist for radiation because it is widely used in medicine. In addition, as a result of the atomic bombings in Japan, genuinely comparable groups of humans exist who were exposed to very different dose levels. This situation is important for proving causality beyond a reasonable doubt. This is unlikely to occur for other pollutants. Thus, relative to ionizing radiation, "proof of harm" in humans from each of the other 10,000 pollutants is going to be even harder to obtain and far easier to challenge.

I do not deny that, under the "prove harm" rule, we have had some successes in reducing the dumping of certain pollutants, including radio- active ones, thanks to the dedicated efforts of citizens. But the lesson remains nevertheless, that the "prove harm" rule puts

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human health at peril.

In the absence of the no-dumping principle, each and every victory is subject to *reversal*. Research will be generously sponsored in the search for that silver lining, and no matter how inconclusive, a succession of new studies will then become the occasion for debate on *relaxing* restrictions on a particular pollutant. Nothing will ever be settled. While "debate" is conducted on 10,000 separate pollutants separately in different countries, the bulk of dumping will continue. Worldwide pollution will increase. Even if the unknown (and unknowable) risks from each of pollutants were very small, the *aggregate* injury to health - from letting each of them build up in the biosphere - could be unpredictable and huge.

It follows that the "prove harm" rule is a totally irresponsible way to approach the pollution issue. The only realistic approach to reducing and preventing pollution is the no-dumping principle. In the absence of this principle, it is essential that we and others keep providing independent research, but we must work vigorously at the same time for adopting the no-dumping principle on behalf of the future generations who rely on us.

Dr.Goffman is Professor Emeritus of Medical Physics at the University of California, Berkeley, and was the Director of Biomedical Division of the Livermore National Laboratory 1963-9.

This reprint was taken from an issue of the Indian journal *Anumukti*, whose sub-title is *a journal devoted to non-nuclear India*. *Anumukti* is a splendid journal struggling to stay alive, and I urge you to subscribe to it! You may do so for $15 a year by writing Editor, *Anumukti*, Sampoorna Kranti Vidyalaya, Vedchhi Dist.: Surat, 394641 INDIA. (Yes, that's VEDCHHI. Two H's.)

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PERSONAL GROWTH:

BEING A MAN IN A COMPLEX AND DANGEROUS WORLD:
Thoughts on coming of age during the sixties and seventies
by Howard Mittleman

Sept. 24, 1990.

I graduated from high school in 1967 and attended the State University of New York at Albany for three and a half years and then dropped out. I turned strongly against the war, the "establishment" and most anything identified as "straight" during the first semester there. While my political views were genuine, representing my gut level feeling that there was something very wrong with our government and our society, I was also very naive and also in rebellion against my parents' values as my way of establishing my own selfhood. Long before my junior year, when the draft lottery put me at risk of being sent to Viet Nam, I had decided I would not go. This decision, however, was only partly based on my political convictions, the rest being just plain fear: fear of other men, of not being good enough, of not being fully a man, as well as the more direct fear of being wounded or killed. Oddly, the fear of injury or death was not as clear as the former fears. I obtained a letter from a sympathetic psychiatrist which ensured a 4F classification for me at my draft physical, and stayed in a deep depression for several days after the physical. I didn't understand at the time why I was so depressed when I "ought to" be happy about the outcome. It now makes sense in light of the guilt and shame I have carried about my not having put myself on the line with my brothers, my not having been tested.

I have found myself thinking about these things in the last couple of years, always believing this "lack" in me would remain unresolved forever. When I heard about the weekend "Warrior" workshop I knew it was important for me to be there.

After returning from this weekend's retreat I

am full of feeling. Together we opened a well of grief that seems bottomless; not just my own grief, though that seems bottomless at times, but the collective grief we touched - for all the souls who have suffered or are suffering on the earth.

I found a place in myself, the depth of which I did not know, filled with shame and fear - of not being good enough, not being man enough, and beneath that the fear for my own survival that lives in the little boy in me. It is this fear, the little boy's fear of everything, that I have struggled for so long to deny. This weekend, with my brothers, I allowed myself the expression of that fear and shame and deep grief. I shared the fear, shame, grief, and rage of my brothers. And I received the gifts of forgiveness, healing of my inner wounds, and the honor of my brothers. For the first time I think, I really allowed myself to receive the messages of comradeship, peerhood and love from a group of men (other than my very close friends). The warrior song sung for me by these men, especially those who fought in war, helped me begin to heal my wounded manhood. I realized that we are all wounded, and that the different wounds received by vets and non-vets are not so different after all; at the least we need each others forgiveness and understanding in order to heal those wounds.

I know that this process will need to continue, perhaps for the rest of my life, but something has shifted for me, an inner sense of dignity has grown stronger, renewing my commitment to help the coming generation to become men who are whole. I know that part of my work now is to work with young people, boys especially, to help initiate them into adulthood; to help them create an inner warrior who is a real man and not a Rambo, and to help re-create the almost forgotten rites of entering into manhood.

Howie Mittleman, a long-time member of the Free School community in Albany, is living his life as a day-to-day exemplar of the principles and insights of which

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he writes so poignantly! His business, North River Boatworks, which he started with passion, craftsmanship and virtually no capital during the seventies, has had its agonies and its triumphs, its financial crises and its periods of prosperity - and is going strong despite the economic crunch!

Howie and his partner Frank (who was a colonel in the Air Force during the Viet Nam war) have garnered several cups and plaques for their magnificent boats, and have established a central reputation among boatbuilders as out-standing practitioners of the old and nearly forgotten craft of traditional wooden boat-building, design and restoration! Even more, Howie and Frank are superb teachers of their craft, and have extended their teaching beyond what they have always had for children from The Free School to apprenticeship training for would-be boat-builders from far and wide. And anyone who works with Howie and Frank knows that what he is receiving is more than training - it is a powerful form of initiation as well!

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Somehow, what Howie is saying fits - for me - with an old hippy poster on the wall of one of our school classrooms:

DESIDERATA

GO PLACIDLY AMID THE NOISE & HASTE, & REMEMBER WHAT PEACE THERE MAY BE IN SILENCE. As far as possible without surrender be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly & clearly; and listen to others, even the dull & ignorant; they too have their story. ~ Avoid loud & aggressive persons, they arc vexations to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others,you may become vain & bitter; for always there will be greater & lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs; for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals; and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially, do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity & disenchantment it is perennial as the grass. Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue & loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees & the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be, and whatever your labors & aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul. With all its sham, drudgery & broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be careful. Strive to be happy.

FOUND IN OLD SAINT PAUL'S CHURCH, BALTIMORE; DATED 1692

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BOOK REVIEWS:
***SAVAGE INEQUALITIES*, by Jonathan Kozol**

Kozol: Kids damned to 'Savage Inequalities'
Schools solution is simple—throw money at the problem
by Steven Wishnia

In 1965, Jonathan Kozol was fired from his job as a fourth-grade teacher in Boston for "curriculum deviation"—reading poems by Langston Hughes and Robert Frost that weren't in the official syllabus.

Death at an Early Age, his book about his experiences in the city's ghetto schools, depicted an educational netherworld: classes held in a crumbling auditorium, with one child nearly decapitated when a jerryrigged blackboard collapsed; ancient, racist textbooks; teachers who dismissed the children as hopelessly ignorant, and a frail, disturbed 8-year-old beaten in the basement almost weekly by teachers with bamboo whips.

Twenty-five years later, Kozol returned to U.S. schools to write a new book, *Savage Inequalities* (recently published by Crown) and discovered that things have gotten worse.

"We've not only failed to live up to Brown" (the Supreme Court's 1954 school desegregation decision), he says. "We're not even up to Plessy," the Court's 1896 'separate but equal' ruling. "Our schools," he adds, "are more separate and more unequal."

Reagan's malign neglect

There is less overt racism in schools today, Kozol told the *Guardian* in an interview before a recent lecture at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. "Teachers tend to be far more sensitive to issues of cultural diversity," he said, and the increasing numbers of Black and Latino teachers and administrators have also helped sensitize white teachers. But racism has made a "terrifying resurgence" in the rest of the country,

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and the federal government "completely turned its back on poor people" in the '80s.

Schools and the children now have to contend with the devastating legacy of the Reagan era's malign neglect: crack, homelessness, pollution and lack of health care outside the schools, and all the ills brought on by fiscal starvation inside.

In East St. Louis, Ill., a 98 percent Black city so poor it had to eliminate municipal garbage collection, Kozol found schools with no toilet seats that had to close several times when raw sewage backed up into the halls. In Chicago, two sixth-grade girls fight over a crayon. Their school rations pencils, paper and crayons to keep from running out in the middle of the year. It sends students to a high school where more than three-quarters of the students drop out.

In the Bronx, he found a high school where the roof leaked so much that a waterfall rushed down the stairs every time it rained. Camden, N.J., schools had antique typewriters but no computers to teach word processing, no books for a ninth-grade writing class and seven badly ripped copies of *A Tale of Two Cities* for an 11th-grade English class of 10.

A 14-year-old East St. Louis girl commented that naming a junior high school after Dr. Martin Luther King, when the "school is full of sewer water and the doors are locked with chains," was "like a terrible joke on history."

"There is nothing I can say that is as damning as what the children say," Kozol told the Stony Brook audience Sept. 12.

Education for the poor

The differences are drastic when compared with the suburban schools he also visited: in Princeton, N.J., where the high school had 200 IBM computers and a Dow Jones hookup to study stock transactions, and New Trier High School in the Chicago suburb of Winnetka, often cited as the best public high school in the United

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Guardphoto by Ken Wishnia

States.

There is little in *Savage Inequalities* that would shock anyone who's ever spent time in inner-city schools. Yet few solutions are on the agenda of politicians or mainstream media, who usually blame parents, teachers or individual administrators for children's failure to learn.

Kozol doesn't believe that having large numbers of children with crack-addicted or alcoholic parents is a valid excuse for schools to fail. "The justification for public education is that regardless of what else is happening in a child's life, the school can make a difference," he says. If public schools can't, they shouldn't exist. We should just close them up and not pretend that we're educating poor children."

Dual system exists

There is a simple solution, he says: money. If New York City schools had the $15,000 per pupil that top-rated districts in affluent suburbs spend each year—instead of half that amount—class sizes could be cut by half.

"A teacher who is good with 40 kids is super-good with 20," he says. "A mediocre teacher who has an awful time with 40 kids might manage to do a pretty good job with 20."

If city schools had suburban-size classes of 18 children, he continues, there would be "no need to filter out the one or two boys who cause trouble. In a class of 35, the two or three boys who cause you trouble screw up the whole school day for everyone else" because the teacher doesn't have time to give them the attention, affection and discipline they need.

"I don't want to take 200 IBM computers from the kids in Princeton," he told the Stony Brook crowd. "I want to give the kids in Camden 200 Apples." He got the most applause when he urged abolishing the inequitable system of financing schools through local property

taxes.

Most of the commonly suggested solutions to the schools' crisis—"magnet" and alternative schools, more choice for parents in picking schools and all-Black-male schools—are sidestepping this main issue, according to Kozol.

He reluctantly supports the all-Black male schools proposed in Detroit, Milwaukee and Brooklyn, N.Y.: He's "philosophically opposed to any official sponsorship of segregation," but says that since many schools are all-Black already and the troublesome students who get shunted into their special-education classes are overwhelmingly male, why not revamp the curriculum, put in some resources, "make it something terrific and call it an African-American immersion school."

However, he says, the real issue is "why this society permits segregated schools and why it permits them to be so unequal." The only truly integrated schools he found were in Jackson, Miss.—and the most segregated were in New York City. But he contends that if New York's schools had as much money as their suburban neighbors, white parents wouldn't send their kids to private schools, and segregated classes wouldn't be an issue.

Though he also says he is a "great believer" in alternative education, he has reservations about the public alternative schools springing up in several cities, like Central Park East Secondary School in New York's East Harlem. He lushly praises the East Harlem school's director, Deborah Meier, but doesn't think the experiment—a network of smaller, less impersonal schools specializing in different subjects—can be replicated successfully in other places.

Because parents have to make special efforts to get their kids into both alternative and selective "magnet schools," he says, they tend to "filter out the most needy children while serving as a magnet for the more fortunate." The most sophisticated parents—middle class, white or Black—can get their children into these

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schools, while poorer parents often don't know how to ask or can't get their kids in. This, he warns, means that poorer children are left in schools drained of the most active, outspoken parents and their kids—perpetuating the "dual system."

Bush voted against civil rights

The same argument underlies Kozol's opposition to the Bush administration's push for "choice" between public and private schools in its "America 2000" report—except that the Bush plan isn't even inspired by good intentions, he says. The idea that free-market competition would force bad schools to improve is worthless without the money to buy adequate supplies and pay enough to attract good teachers, he argues. The "segregation academies" that opened in the South in the aftermath of the Brown decision also emphasized free choice, he adds and it's not a coincidence that Bush voted against the 1964 civil rights bill as a member of congress.

Outraged innocence

"I was a victim of 'political correctness,'" he adds. "I never heard of Langston Hughes until some Black parents told me about him, and I majored in English and American literature at Harvard."

Kozol, who says he was apolitical before he started teaching, calls himself "an eternal optimist"—and retains the outraged innocence of '60s politics. "I persist in believing there are an awful lot of decent people in America," he says. "It's still worth making a straightforward ethical appeal."

"You know the argument you always hear for Head Start: 'We ought to do this because it's going to be cost-effective. If we help these kids it'll save us money later on'?" he continues. "I don't like that argument. It's true. It would be cost-effective. But I think we ought to do these things because they're decent."

Reprinted From *The Guardian*

Jonathan Kozol has been a voice crying in the wilderness of American heartlessness and a passionate advocate for the children of the poor for lo! these many years! Unlike a number of other educational reformers who began their work during the sixties, Jonathan still speaks for those same forgotten victims of our race-class system and our bureaucracy. He is my heart brother!

Yeah, I guess he's also sort of "prejudiced" toward the people who perpetrate these horrifying injustices, as Ken Lebensold more or less intimated in the summer issue - but he's also speaking his painful truths in the face of virtually universal indifference! So I hope he keeps it up! The prophetic tradition is a very hard one to follow. God bless, Jonathan!

***WHAT ARE SCHOOLS FOR?* by Ron Miller.**
175 pp., $18.95, cpb. Holistic Ed. Press,
39 Pearl St., Brandon, VT 05733-1007

What keeps America from being the land of democracy, humankindness and plenty we keep singing about? Must we continue to blame our shortfall on "those people" (fill in the blank) who make attainment of our ideal impossible of achievement, in spite of all our good will and best efforts? Is it possible for us to "wake up" and begin to look - really look - at our values? Can we make a start, at long last, in the painful process of uncovering the truths about "us" both wonderful *and* horrifying - and everything in between?

Here is a book which makes a splendid beginning to that process by giving us an extraordinarily balanced, varied and well-documented account of our American social, religious, economic and political beliefs and policies in terms of their impact on our perennial educational system. Ron Miller, editor of *Holistic Education Review*, has clearly devoted a great deal of time and thought to this scholarly yet eminently readable account of the complex interrelationships among the many themes which go to make up the "temper of the times" at any historical period of our history and the educational system which reflected those themes. Some of these themes, Miller points out, run throughout our history, like the moralism of the "Protestant ethic," the dogma of capitalism which grew out of the industrial age, the perennially limited nature of our democratic way of governance, limited by our blind exclusion of various "out" groups such as blacks, women, children and immigrants, and the dogma of "scientism" which forms the basis of mainstream assumptions about the nature of reality and undergirds both our educational philosophy and our curricular policies in the field of education, to the patently disastrous outcome for our children with which we are presently struggling.

Miller's proposed solution to our national

educational dilemma is, in a sense, to fit the cure to the disease - which translates into the twelve-step process which has begun to play such a significant role in the lives of our "failures," people whose lives have so clearly come to a grinding halt through alcoholism, divorce, drug addiction, personal unhappiness, chronic illness and a host of other ills - in a word, our sins - which is that only acknowledgement of our failures can even begin to give us the "space" to set things right - which means that we must "bite the bullet"- we must begin by telling the truth! As the Zen saying goes, the teacup must be empty before it can become full. But equally important in this process is our willingness to acknowledge dependence - interdependence upon one another, and our ultimate dependence upon a higher power. Like Prometheus, who stole fire from the gods, and was condemned for his hubris by being chained in perpetuity to a rock with an eagle eating his liver, we need to learn to recognize the need for genuine humility and gratitude for our lives and for our home, the planet.

I wish two things about this review - first, that I knew who wrote it, so I could acknowledge her/him - and second, that I had written it myself! It expresses exactly what I would have liked to say about Ron's book.

My Life as a Traveling Home Schooler
by Jenifer Goldman

Solomon Press, 417 Roslyn Road, Roslyn Heights, N Y 11577,1991; 95 pages, pb, $12.95.

Eleven-year-old Jenifer Goldman starts out by telling the reader, "Through most of my life school's been pretty miserable." Fortunately, Jenifer has an uncle, Jerry Mintz, who is probably the most knowledgeable and active advocate for alternative education in the United States, and he agrees to take her with him on his travels to educational conferences and meetings in Canada, Virginia, Montana, Texas, California, and points between. Jerry and Jenifer meet an assortment of people—ranchers, Baha'is, Native Americans, Europeans, teachers, and homeschoolers—and they visit museums and schools. The author concludes that her homeschooling experience enabled her to make more friends than she would have made in schools and she says, "Learning while traveling sure beats sitting in an old classroom any time, or sitting around the house.... You get to explore the world and what it really is." The book includes photos.

(Reprinted from *Holistic Education Review*, Winter, 1991.)

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Earth Manuals

In an age when how-to books exist on every subject under the sun from housebreaking your cocker spaniel to improving your forehand, it seems only fitting that there should be a published guide to the proper care and feeding of our planet. Following the first Earth Day 20 years ago, a number of such books hit the shelves. But life has changed, accelerated by computers and other electronic aids; pollution has filled up in people's backyards; what were emerging environmental sciences 20 years ago have evolved into bonafide disciplines. Earth Day 1990's dawn broke over a very different terrain.

Appropriately, the '90s have ushered in a new breed of Earth manuals which address a new breed of problems and solutions. While most of the problems have existed for many decades, technology has only recently become sensitive enough to detect and analyze them.

As research and technology have become more sophisticated, so has the media's description of environmental issues. Ask yourself - do you know what "drawdown" is? How about a "scrubber?" (Hint: It's not found in the kitchen.) Or do you know the difference between the "greenhouse effect" and "global warming?"

Another hint: These answers will not be found in the daily press, unless the writer needs to fill space at the end of a story. These answers can, however, be found in a number of the new Earth manuals published this year. The Cousteau Society has picked three that we feel most effectively communicate the problems currently facing the planet and suggestions for their solution.

50 Simple Things You Can Do to Save the Earth
Author: The Earth Works Group Publisher: Earthworks Press, Box 25, 1400 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94709 $4.95, Softcover, 96 pp.

This slim volume lives up to its title. The book begins with an introduction by Chris Calwell of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), lamenting the research time it takes to answer the diverse questions he receives regarding the environment because answers are not contained in one volume. *50 Simple Things . ..* saves a time-consuming step not only for professionals like Chris, but also for the layperson looking for quick tips on how to modify his or her day-to-

day lifestyle to improve the planet's health.

This is not the book to consult for detailed descriptions of environmental problems, however. They are relegated to one-page treatments comprised mostly of excerpts from source material and quotes from experts.

The 50 tips are broken into three categories based on degree of commitment required to pursue them: "Simple Things," "It takes Some Effort" and "For the Committed." Each category contains good, commonsense suggestions to help rectify the threats facing the planet today. The text is straightforward and laid out in an entertaining way.

A similar volume for children, *50 Simple Things Kids Can Do to Save the Earth*, has recently been published by Earthworks.

Design For a Livable Planet
Author: Jon Naar Publisher: Harper & Row, New York $12.95, Softcover, 338 pp.

Much more than a how-to book, this is an in-depth resource clearly presented. Naar has drawn on his many years as an environmental writer and lecturer to put together a compendium of the issues ranging from "Environmental Law" to "Renewable Energy."

Design For a Livable Planet is geared toward readers who, in addition to wanting to contribute to solutions, would like some detail about the problems. The text is filled with case-histories of people and organizations which have actually made a difference. It also contains clear charts and illustrations.

The material is divided into 12 chapters, each devoted to a general category such as air pollution, water pollution, and waste disposal. Within each chapter, the subject is broken down into specific components of the problem and actions individuals can take to contribute to their solution. A detailed listing of federal and state agencies and private organizations which deal with the issue conclude each chapter. In addition, there are

glossaries of environmental terms, extensive lists of books and periodicals for further reading, and footnote references.

Naar and his literary agent, Sarah Jane Freymann, are donating 10 percent of their profits from the sale of *Design for a Livable Planet* to several environmental organizations, including The Cousteau Society.

How to Make the World a Better Place: A Guide to Doing Good

Author: Jeffrey Hollender Publisher: William Morrow, New York $9.95, Softcover, 303 pp.

Hollender, a successful entrepreneur in the environmental field, is chairman and CEO of Seventh Generation, the nation's first direct-mail catalog of environmentally safe consumer products. In tone and style, his book most closely resembles 50 *Simple Things* .... but begins to approach Naar's book in the descriptions of the different issues. Its style is informal and personable, as if Hollender were sitting on the sofa next to you. The book is structured around 120 numbered actions that any person can perform to assist in keeping the planet healthy. Unfortunately, in laying out the book, more attention was given to the actions than to overall organization. For this reason and because it lacks an index, readers can become a little confused in seeking specific facts.

While most readers wouldn't curl up with one of these books next to a crackling fire on a cold winter night, we feel that they are the best of their fast-growing genre. More importantly, if we wish to continue to have a place to curl up in, we had all better start reading the manuals instead of leaving it to the experts.

– Reviewed by Tim Knipe for the Cousteau Society.

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Sudbury Valley School people - picture taken from *Free at Last*

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BOOK REVIEWS:

A new book by Dan Greenberg: A *New Look at Schools* from the Sudbury Valley School Press, 2 Winch St., Framingham, MA 01701.

Dan's other books:
***The Sudbury Valley Experience*, 1985, no price given.**
***Free at Last: The Sudbury Valley School*, 1987. Ditto.**
***Child Rearing*, 1987. Ditto.**
***A New Look at Schools*, 1992. $7.00**
The latter reviewed (well, sort of) by Mary Leue

These are just the books Dan has written that I have copies of. On pages 121-3 of the new one is a compilation of books, pamphlets and "Essays not in print" by Dan and others, and constitutes Appendix A. Appendices B. and C. follow, my thinking being that they are far too important to try to précis. (Besides, I'm not very good at précis-writing. My high school English teacher, splendid though he was, didn't somehow get around to teaching us that highly useful skill! Ah, well.)

Look: I am very serious about this. See - I went to Bryn Mawr College, on a scholarship, during the Depression, majoring in history. (Wot in 'ell 'as that to do with Dan's books? Well, it does, but the journey back is roundabout, so hang in a bit.) I did lousy, OK? I was barely sixteen when I landed among all those upper class females who had been to posh boarding schools and I didn't even like to take baths, let alone wear silk stockings, as was the rule then when you went to tea with The Dean, and all that great stuff.

In other words, I was a dirty hippy who liked to read a lot, but no scholar! Let alone a proper '30's female. I'd spent my summers hanging out with my older brothers' working-class-family friends, playing poker (with chips), mud-clamming, swimming in the mucky bay and messing about in our Swampscott sailing dory alone, seeing how far out into Boston Harbor I could sail and still get back in time for supper, tacking all the way back when the afternoon breeze turned

seaward.

At college I had no scholarly skills to speak of, and so sweated a lot trying not to flunk the courses I didn't adore - but a lot of passion for scholars, especially if they were men and looked like Leslie Howard! Which some of them did. I loved English, German, Greek literature in translation, stuff like that, disliked science and social science and screwed up totally on my history until my senior year, when I suddenly hit my stride and found my bliss in grasping the continuity of "historicity," I guess you could call it, and skated through to the A.B.

I guess I'm still the same way. I love the orderly minds of scholars! I even love their concepts now - some of them. And I am aware of how badly our educational system has served us as Americans in preventing us as a people from enjoying grappling with abstract ideas. In a word, we are anti-intellectual. Not stupid - but we sure hate to feel unable to understand what a person is saying! It makes us *feel* stupid! And that is the fault of the educational system, with its testing and its top-down topic-mandating and all that other coerced stuff we do.

And at the other extreme are the academics, who are like Marie Antoinette when it comes to the lives of ordinary people - let 'em eat cake! Stupid! Social dunces! That's what Jonathan Kozol is trying to fight - that insane mental classification system that devolves into an educational system that perpetuates the discrimination and the social class prejudice that is its monstrous offspring! Pure prejudice! Damn, that makes me so mad! We are in the business of destroying minds! That's sacrilege! There's nothing wrong with minds! God must have loved them - he made so many of them! But I digress, to foam at the mouth a bit...

OK. So I was madly in love the whole four years I was in this women's college. And my main obsession was a young Dutch philosophy professor named Desiré Téodor Veltmann (honest!). Ah, just writing out that beloved name sends chills down my seventy-two-year-old spine! He was tall and rail-thin, with a fluff of white-

gold hair (crew-cut, but untended by a barber most of the time) topping a long brown face like Max von Sydow's. Ooh! And so-o-o-o mysterious, shy, fearful of young women, reclusive, pitiful. But a brilliant lecturer in his delightful accent. He wore a black suit, a black shirt with a lemon-yellow necktie, and scuffed white shoes. I think they were his only clothes. Remember, this was Depression days. College faculty salaries were very low. He probably got less than $1800 a year! His chapped wrists hung out of his sleeves, and his overcoat was thin and shabby. Irresistibly Dostoevskian! I used to shadow him wherever he went, between classes. He was too shy to tell me to piss off, I guess. (Sorry for the street talk - maybe I'm a addict, but sometimes it's the only way to say something. No offense meant. Folks, I'm no lady.)

OK - to cut it short, after graduation, I entered nurse's training in Boston and met my husband when he contracted scarlet fever in graduate school at Harvard College *in philosophy* (get it?) and was stashed away in the Children's Hospital. I took care of him there. A marriage made in heaven! Ever since, I have loved men who have exciting intellectual gifts. I find myself able to struggle through abstractions (like Kadushin's below) when and if they are expounding ideas that make sense to me in terms of learning. I did a lot of my graduate work on learning and perception. And Kadushin's *do* make sense to me, both mentally and metaphysically!! He's struggling to express the inexpressible, to eff the ineffable, using Whitehead, Plato, and maybe a little of Hegel as his organizing principles. (See how I have benefitted from my husband's Harvard education?) Trying to map the territory of the mind. So are Leslie Hart, Joseph Chilton Pierce, a few other people, but coming from brain physiology. But they are all deeply concerned about the nature of learning.

But I am aware of how poorly the language of philosophical abstraction fits the explication of concreteness!!! My husband wrote his PhD thesis on

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Whitehead's value theory, and I typed most of it out for him, and have heard him expound Whitehead many, many times, so I am able to catch his (Whitehead's) *flavor* in a way that his use of language serves very badly (it seems to me). I even tried to read him, but, like John Dewey, he writes such tortured prose as to be virtually unreadable except to a dedicated scholar.

Our Rosalie Bianchi struggled through her M.A. thesis on Piaget, Skinner and Dewey (with my husband as her mentor) and ended up doing one hell of a job making them clear and readable - at least, to me - a remarkable feat! I suspect one reason Ron Miller's periodical, *Holistic Education Review*, has been such a disappointment to him in readership terms - although he has at least ten times more subscribers than ΣΚΟΑΕ does - is because, like ΣΚΟΑΕ, it doesn't fit neatly into any one scholarly category easily pigeon-holed by some scholastic specialist, and yet is clearly academic - i.e., about *ideas*!

OK. That's Appendix B, the Kadushin article. I've transferred it out of the context of this so-called book review to where it properly belong, as a reprinted article in its own right. I hope Dan will forgive me for taking the liberty of doing so as part of the reviewing process he asked me for!! It's my own sometimes tortuous way of categorizing entities by internal value.

Appendix C, on play at Sudbury Valley, on the other hand, is here, where it belongs, as the child of Dan's beautiful, warm heart! This piece, for me, does in vivid narrative terms what the metaphysics of Kadushin is trying to do in abstract language. Both are highly spiritual art forms, to me! Like the Kabbalah and the stories of Sholem Asch, they are both about human nature as holy ground! Saying the same thing, but in different media. And remember, the medium is the message. Right? But we've got to learn the beauty of both modalities, it seems to me.

Dan's account could easily have been written by a member of our school's staff describing what our

Sudbury Valley School people - picture taken from *Free at Last*

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kids do! And should have been! Because they do! We had a gang of girls absorbed in creating a plasticene village that took up a whole table top all last year! As Dan knows, you'd have to see it to believe its delicate intricacy and skill at miniaturization! And not a breath about learning or art or any of that nonsense! Just kids absolutely gone into bliss on their game! My wise mother brought me a little paper cut-out pueblo village to assemble that saved my sanity when I was abed with a broken arm and a broken head, after an accident on (or rather, off!) horseback when I was nine!

So what's my point? Like the song:

"Put it all together, it spells M..O..T..H..E..R,
A word that means the world to me!"

Matrix. Not really mother, but matrix. Context. Embeddedness in a medium. Kadushin and Ron Miller are right - we must understand organic process in terms of *contexts*. And, like the word *matrix*, we must learn to take into consideration the yin nature of created systems and processes, not just the yang of them. No, not in the abstract, necessarily, but we must understand how concepts translate into different languages, changing their function *in our bodies* as they undergo this "sea change into something rich and strange," as Shakespeare puts it, moving *inside our body-minds* from the language we learned from our fathers to the language we learned from our mothers, and back again. Women tend to *operate in* concreteness, men to *talk about it*. There's a wonderful piece in *Common Boundary*, a dialogue between Robert Bly and Deborah Tannenberg about gender differences in communication styles. We gotta learn this stuff! Some of you who've been reading the above drivel have no doubt felt annoyed or bored, others amused, entertained. Communication styles make the world go round - or not!

Dan Greenberg is a bundle of paradoxes, in these terms, a complete human being, a prophet *with* honor in his own country. He loves abstraction, like a good scientist and a man, but he also loves people - (when he's not

Sudbury Valley School people - picture taken from *Free at Last*

not furious with them for being pig-headed like himself!). And of course, he's right as a human being who incorporates these two gender styles in one person - like John Gatto! Like Jonathan Kozol! These are lovely men who function in both gender styles. I try to, from the opposite side. I suspect we are supposed to, if we want to attain complete selfhood - individuation, to use Jung's term. How do we learn that? Go to Sudbury Valley or The Free School, I guess. They don't teach it, even in the public school in Princeton, New Jersey that Jonathan admires so much! Gender, for me, lies below class and race. We gotta address it all!

Well, enough "teachy talk," as my #3 son Tom used to call it. Here's Dan's book. Look - it's really good, dealing with the same American issues Ron Miller's book is looking at. And graphically, it is superb, worth every nickel of its price! No pictures, but *Free at Last* is full of delightful images of Sudbury Valley School - and this one isn't that sort of book! So get 'em both! They're cheap, so get several copies and give them to your local superintendent of schools! Oh - and get Ron's two, too, and load him (yes, of course the SS is a him) down! Here's a run-down of *New Look*'s chapter headings:

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INTRODUCTION
The Continuing Crisis in American Education

PART I VALUE SYSTEMS AND EDUCATION
1 Culture and the Value System
2 Cultural Pluralism in the United States
3 The American Value System
4 Learning
5 The Maturation of the World View

PART II CULTURAL STYLES OF LIVING

6 Defining the Pre-Industrial Culture
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8 Stabilizing the Industrial Culture
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10 The Post-industrial Life Style

PART III LOOKING FORWARD
11 Raising Children in the Post-industrial Age
12 The Need For a New Type OF School
13 Transition Schools
14 Education Beyond Schools

A FINAL NOTE

APPENDIX A
Publications of The Sudbury Valley School Dealing with Educational Theory

APPENDIX B
A Brief Summary of the Theory of Organic Thinking, as Explained in the Words of its First Theoretician, Max Kadushin

APPENDIX C
The Role of Play at Sudbury Valley School

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Note: Appendix B, Kadushin's article on organic thinking, appears on pp. 70-79. Here's Dan's delightful article on play. Read 'em both prayerfully, please!

APPENDIX C:

THE ROLE OF PLAY AT SUDBURY VALLEY SCHOOL

[The following is also the chapter, "Play" from *Free At Last: The Sudbury Valley School* (1991), by Daniel Greenberg, pp. 79-83.]

Day after day, month after month, a village was slowly taking shape before our eyes. Spread out over a large table appropriated from the art room, the plasticene model almost seemed real.

Often, six or more kids at a time would be huddled over the table for hours, chattering away, as they tried to create perfect miniature replicas of everything they could think of. Horses, trees, cars, trucks, animals, fences, people--everything. Not just any old replicas, but flawless reproductions. There was. for example, a complete "motor" under the (detachable!) hood of every automobile, the whole of which could easily fit into my hand. People finger-high had clothes and features. Roofs had tiles. walls had doors, interior rooms had tables and chairs.

All was made out of plasticene, worked and rolled and modeled and formed. It was a big game. The game lasted over two years. No one suggested even remotely that these children, aged eight to fourteen (mostly boys), were "doing" art, for example. The idea would have offended them. No staff help was asked for, none was given. To the participants, it was play. Serious, concentrated, play, great fun without limits.

Every generation at school seems to have its serious "clubs." It usually starts at around nine or ten years old, with an occasional younger hanger-on tolerated, and lasts a year or two for each new group. There is a club, and of course a clubhouse. At first that was an old ramshackle hut in the woods, until that fell

down. Later, it was a room in the stables. Then it was a large closet in the main building. Still later, when that was off limits because of fire regulations, the clubhouse could be any "secret" area enclosed, if necessary, by imaginary walls and roof. Furniture had to be spirited into it -- an old rug, perhaps; a chair; a table. Rituals had to be invented, plots and plans hatched, spies launched, guards posted. A world of intrigue would be created, filled with complexity. The kids involved were always busy, always terribly concentrated.

Play at school is serious business. I think play is always serious for kids, as well as for adults who haven't forgotten how to play. Professional educators are often troubled by play, mostly because kids devote energy and intelligence to play that far exceeds what they put into schoolwork. Occasionally, to make things more palatable, educational psychologists will write about the value play has in "learning" -- for example, in learning motor skills, or learning creative problem-solving, or something else with a label that sounds legitimate.

The fact is, play is a big part of life at Sudbury Valley. And it is one of the prime factors of learning here. But what is learned is a different lesson than you might think. What is learned is the ability to concentrate and focus attention unsparingly on the task at hand, without regard for limitations -- no tiredness, no rushing, no need to abandon a hot idea in the middle to go on to something else. This "lesson" is retained for life.

Most of the kids at school, especially the younger ones, are too busy playing to eat or rest all day. By late afternoon, they are ready for a huge meal and a good night's sleep. They've worked long and hard.

As elaborate as the play is, the tools and equipment needed are, to understate it, inexpensive. When we first were preparing to open the school, we spent long hours allocating our small budget to all sorts of "necessary" play equipment, especially for little kids. We started with the usual collection of stuff you can find in nurseries, kindergartens, and child recreation

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centers. As the first years unfolded, we watched in disbelief. The equipment lay almost entirely unused. Much of what was handled was put to wholly different uses than those for which it had been intended.

The chief equipment the kids use is the chairs, the tables, the rooms, the closets, and the outdoors, with its woods and bushes, rocks and secret corners. The primary tool is their imagination. After twelve years of lying around and occasionally being added to by donations, about three-quarters of the play stuff was put into boxes and stored in the attic. There it sits. The attic is dry, so it will probably last a long time up there.

There are some exceptions. Older kids play board games that they bring in from home: "Monopoly," for days at a time. "Risk," a fad that lasted four years, and turned the players into geographers and military strategists. And "Dungeons and Dragons," of course, with each player's elaborate collection of accessories carefully assembled and privately owned. I guess "D & D" was more tolerable to outsiders than most games, since in it people "learned" things -- about medieval life, for instance.

We take play seriously here. We wouldn't dream of interfering with it. So it flourishes at all ages. And the graduates who leave school go out into the world knowing how to give their all to whatever they're doing, and still remembering how to laugh and enjoy life as it comes.

LETTERS:

The points Robert Theobald is making in the letters below seem to me both highly relevant to what needs to change in the entire "holistic education" movement - including "alternative education" - as well as specifically pertinent to the intra-organizational warfare still being conducted behind the scenes of the Coalition!

The message that I as editor am struggling to make, again and again, is that these Coalition issues are

1. *not confined to the NCACS,*
2. *are not truly personal but organizational, as Dan Greenberg has been trying to say for several years, and*
3. *are being "personalized" because it is less disturbing to reduce them to the purely personal rather than look at the real nature of organizational policies on the task to be performed.*

Ron Miller (Holistic Education Review) *has been making the same point for a couple of years as well.*

Theobald is saying that we need to look more compassionately at group process as such - but he speaks for himself far more eloquently than I can speak for him.

March 8, 1991.

... I believe that education is central. I have been spending a good deal of time on it. I am impressed by the number of people who would like to change mainstream education and am also impressed by the incredible inertia. I think that alternative education is certainly a major player in the effort to bring about change but I believe that there is a need for crossfertilization between the two systems at this point.

I honestly have to say that my overloads are so great at this point that I am not a good critic of the magazine [**ΣΚΟΑΕ**]. My comments have to be general. You know as well as I do the infoglut under which we are all suffering. If the work gives you pleasure and if a

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few people learn from it I think this is enough to go on doing it. I think we have to get used to smaller-scale activity if we want to be relevant...

November 17, 1991.

... I'm delighted that you have got Gatto involved. It is my sense that he is doing a great deal of good to the debate. I assume he knows that he is being circulated widely. His stuff has reached me through a number of routes. If you have an opportunity, please tell him so from me.

I also appreciate the quotes from me in your letter and in the magazine. You are right, I misstated myself when I said that what you were writing was "not relevant to my deep concerns." The point I was trying to make was that I was simply not reading the stuff that I was getting and I hate to get stuff and have it accumulate in my pile.

You have some good articles in the last issue. I particularly like, besides Gatto, your challenge to the movement to stop fighting with each other and the piece about the failure of the left to support freedom in the schools. I believe that if we treated people as if they were twice as bright as they think we are, half of our problems would vanish.

Here are the things I am doing in the education field at the current time:

-- I am putting together a conference in Iowa which will aim to imagine an ideal educational system for the compassionate era. I'd love this to spark similar efforts in other states.

-- I may be working in Louisiana to make a difference to education in the State through a consortium, supported by business and Tulane.

-- I am hoping to impact education in Oregon where they have passed a bill calling for very new models but nobody knows what to do with it - in addition, a cap on taxes has been passed which threatens education and everything else unless good decisions are made.

-- Harpers has expressed interest in an article which will show why the current business emphases in the educational field are highly destructive.

-- I have written a chapter for the new book which claims that the goal for for the future ought to be learning societies and this should replace the current goal of maximum economic growth.

... I do think you're doing good work. Congratulations. I also think that there is a move toward our sort of thinking if only we could stop fighting with each other and present a united front. The movement needs to recognize it can now change the direction of the culture if it chooses: are we willing to take on this level of responsibility or do we prefer to bicker?

December 14, 1991.

...Thank you for the contact information on Gatto. We'll be able to work out a speaking date I think with him.

I have a few ideas about why we're not listening to each other. I think too few people yet believe in the power of positive ideas and are still increasing the volume of negative vibes at a time when people are terrified. I also think that too many change agents are pushing their own narrow cause.

I am increasingly moving to the belief that the necessary changes are going to come about, if they do, because of ordinary people who find that systems are not working for them. It is our responsibility, I think, to show them what we have learned over so many years

and decades and help them to adopt what will be good for them. I find so many ordinary people in the schools who are ready for change but don't know how to break through the inertia.

You'll be amused. I'm working on Governor Edwards' transition team on education, which may actually come up with something. And I'm preparing some grants to go to business where I hope to force them to adhere to their rhetoric of "break-the-mold" schools...

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SPECIAL SECTION ON JOHN TAYLOR GATTO:

L U N O
Learning Unlimited Network of OR,
31960 SE CHIN ST, BORING OR 97009
Gene Lehman 503/663-5153

GATTO GOES FOR CARNEGIE HALL

John Taylor Gatto, New York State Teacher of the Year (1991) has reserved Carnegie Hall (Nov. 13) for a discussion: THE EXHAUSTED SCHOOL: Why Our Schools Are Dying. Enlisting a panel 7 other voices for school reform coming from a variety of alternative approaches, the ODYSSEUS GROUP hopes to reach a wide range of people concerned about education.

Though I cannot know at this time how well ODYSSEUS has succeeded in putting it all together, the truly inspiring thing is that they are going for it. While not directly connected with this endeavor, I consider LUNO a contributory part of all efforts to open up education to unlimited reform. I feel especially in harmony with all who dare to believe in persistence, miracles and prayer.

I did have enough serious reservations about using such a showy tactic and working through Established Institutions to write John my concerns. He promptly replied:

> I don't believe in leaders, leadership, gurus, or hierarchies of any sort, hate the telephone, hardly ever use it and am not likely ever to *enjoy* telling strangers what's on my mind. My main purpose in taking Carnegie Hall is to show everyone that *anyone*, even a junior high school teacher without savings or powerful friends, can do something like this. It's an act of imagination, not of strategy or tactics. I hope to go fishing when it's over. [Oct.15; 235 W. 76th ST, NEW YORK NY 10023 212/874-3631]

I heartily empathize with John's attitude toward hierarchical control, his telephone feelings (I believe my

telephonic unease comes in part from the fact that I was brought up without a family telephone) and even his dream of going fishing (though I gave up this sport 30 yrs. ago, finding it more frustrating than relaxing and have since become too sensitive to a fish's feelings to enjoy hooking one, I still dream of "catching the big one.").

I also share John's devotion to imagination, his faith in following his personal Inspiration free from the stifling smog of **higher-arkical** controls that poison individual creativity and restrict expression to Established procedures. It is a great challenge to maintain a balance between the flighty heights of imagination and the hard rocks of reality. Surviving, apparently even thriving after 26 years teaching in junior high, John seems to have the steadying sense of personal balance and the free-floating flexibility needed to sustain an efficacious challenge. While disdaining leadership and commanding no partisan allegiance, John is lighting a way. Who or what follows does not worry him. That is the challenge for the rest of us...

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And here is our flyer for the workshop:
The Free School presents:

JOHN TAYLOR GATTO
NEW YORK STATE'S TEACHER OF THE YEAR
Saturday,, October 26, 1991
1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

TEACHING WORKSHOP ON "GUERILLA CURRICULUM"

John Taylor Gatto has been teaching in New York City's schools in Manhattan for 26 years. He is New York State's Teacher of the Year for 1991 as named by the New York State Education Department. He has been named New York City Teacher of the Year for the past three years running. His unconventional views of education have been aired on a nationally distributed documentary IV film made by World-Monitor TV in Boston and he has been a guest on PBS McNeill-Lehrer News hour discussing the U.S. Education Department.

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He believes that schools as they are presently structured teach things we have no conscious intention of teaching - that is, confusion, class status, indifference, emotional and intellectual dependency, limited self-esteem and the need for constant adult surveillance. He has concluded after his years of teaching that standardized tests, 48-minute class periods punctuated by shrill bells, grading by age level, and all the other traditional staples of public schooling produce conformist, dehumanized and indifferent students.

He states,"What students need from the adult world is the chance to learn something real. If they learn one thing real well, there's a good chance they can learn something else real well. But if they're given a scattering of superficial knowledge in order to get through tests, they may never learn anything well."

He will share with those who attend this workshop his prescription for introducing "real world" experiences into the lives of young people. Destructuring the learning environment is basic. Seven aspects of his prescription include apprenticeships (his students have shadowed surgeons and street peddlers), community service, parental involvement, independent study and what he calls "field curriculum."

Workshop Information:
Time - Saturday, October 26, 1991, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Location: New York State Museum Cultural Education Center Auditorium, Empire State Plaza, Madison Avenue, Albany, New York.

Here's John's Carnegie Hall poster:

The Odysseus Group presents:

An Evening With

NEW YORK STATE TEACHER OF THE YEAR

JOHN TAYLOR GATTO

AND SEVEN OTHER VOICES OF SCHOOL REFORM

AT **CARNEGIE HALL**

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13TH, 7:30 P.M. SHARP

IN A DISCUSSION OF

THE EXHAUSTED SCHOOL

A SPEAKOUT ON PARENT CHOICE FIND OUT WHY
SCHOOLS AND MUCH MORE OUR SCHOOLS ARE DYING

Your ideas are splendid.
I just hope
someone is listening.
— *Christopher Lasch*

Gatto is the most important
school reformer in years,
a broad-ranging intellect
John Holt, Inc.
Cambridge, Mass.

YOU WILL LEARN:

How to Bend the Bars of Our Traditional Factory Schools!
What Real Public School Alternatives Can Do!
Exciting Private School Choices at Bargain Prices!
How To Get an Education at Home!
Why You Should Listen to the Voices of Self-Schooling!
How Free-Market Choices can Revive American Education!

John Taylor Gatto and the Guerrilla Curriculum Featuring:
DAN GREENBERG, founder of the amazing SUDBURY VALLEY SCHOOL near Boston — PAT FARENGA, publisher of "Growing Without Schooling" and President of JOHN HOLT ASSOCIATES — MARY LEUE, founder of the legendary ALBANY FREE SCHOOL — DAVE LEHMAN, Principal of the nationally famous ITHACA PUBLIC ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITY SCHOOL — ROLAND LEGIARDI-LAURA, award winning filmmaker, structural engineer and co-founder of

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the world-famous POET'S CAFE - BARBARA JILL CUMMINGS, internationally known lecturer on jungle ecology, author of *Dam the Rivers, Damn the People* - JAMAAL WATSON and VICTOR GONZALEZ, 14-year-old creators of ELVIS IMPERSONATOR and other original comic creations; and JOHN TAYLOR GATTO, creator of "THE GUERRILLA CURRICULUM" (How To Get An Education in Spite of School) and author of *Dumbing Us Down: The Hidden Curriculum of Compulsory Schooling*.

The Odysseus Group may be reached for information or exclusive boxes by calling (212) 529-9327 or (212) 874-3631 or writing to John Taylor Gatto, 235 West 76th Street, New York, New York 10023.

From the back side of the flyer:

I May Be a Teacher, but I'm Not an Educator
by JOHN TAYLOR GATTO

I've taught public school for 26 years but I just can't do it anymore. For years I asked the local school board and superintendent to let me teach a curriculum that doesn't hurt kids, but they had other fish to fry. So I'm going to quit. I think I've come slowly to understand what it is I really teach: a curriculum of confusion, class position, arbitrary justice, vulgarity, rudeness, disrespect for privacy, indifference to quality, and utter dependency. I teach how to fit into a world I don't want to live in. I just can't do it anymore. I can't train children to wait to be told what to do; I can't train people to drop what they are doing when a bell sounds; I can't persuade children to feel some justice in their class placement when there isn't any, and I can't persuade children to believe teachers have valuable secrets they can acquire by becoming our disciples. That isn't true.

Government schooling is the most radical adventure in history. It kills the family by monopolizing the best times of childhood and by teaching disrespect for home and parents. An exaggeration? Hardly. Parents aren't meant to participate in our form of schooling, rhetoric to the contrary. My orders as schoolteacher are to make children fit an animal training system, not to help each find his or her personal path.

The whole blueprint of school procedure is Egyptian,

not Greek or Roman. It grows from the faith that human value is a scarce thing, represented symbolically by the narrow peak of a pyramid. That idea passed into American history through the Puritans. It found its "scientific" presentation in the bell curve, along which talent supposedly apportions itself by some Iron Law of biology. It's a religious idea and school is its church. New York City hires me to be a priest. I offer rituals to keep heresy at bay. I provide documentation to justify the heavenly pyramid.

Socrates foresaw that if teaching became a formal profession something like this would happen. Professional interest is best served by making what is easy to do seem hard, by subordinating laity to priesthood. School has become too vital a jobs project, contract-giver and protector of the social order to allow itself to be "re-formed." It has political allies to guard its marches. That's why reforms come and go-without changing much. Even reformers can't imagine school much different.

David learns to read at age four; Rachel, at age nine. In normal development, when both are 13, you can't tell which one learned first-the five-year spread means nothing at all. But in school I will label Rachel "learning disabled" and slow David down a bit, too. For a paycheck, I adjust David to depend on me to tell him when to go and stop. He won't outgrow that dependency. I identify Rachel as discount merchandise, "special education." After a few months she'll be locked into her place forever.

In 26 years of teaching rich kids and poor I almost never met a "learning disabled" child, hardly every met a "gifted and talented" one, either. Like all school categories, these are sacred myths, created by the human imagination. They derive from questionable values we never examine because they preserve the temple of schooling. That's the secret behind short-answer tests, bells, uniform time blocks, age grading, standardization, and all the rest of the school religion punishing our nation. There isn't a right way to become educated, there are as many ways as fingerprints. We don't need state-certified teachers to make education happen–that probably guarantees it won't.

How much more evidence is necessary? Good schools don't need more money or a longer year; they need real free-market choices, variety that speaks to every need and

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runs risks. We don't need a national curriculum, or national testing either. Both initiatives arise from ignorance of how people learn, or deliberate indifference to it. I can't teach this way any longer. If you hear of a job where I don't have to hurt kids to make a living, let me know. Come fall I'll be looking for work, I think.

Mr. Gatto is New York State Teacher of the Year for 1991.

John Taylor Gatto speaking at Carnegie Hall

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And here's an eloquent article by John (no, not his speech, which was also eloquent!) on community and real relationship, as opposed to "compulsory school networks." You'll be reading more of his splendid thoughts in future issues. I particularly like this one (for reasons you can easily discern!).

WE NEED LESS SCHOOL, NOT MORE

[Families, Communities, Networks, and the Proposed Enlargement of Schooling]

by John Taylor Gatto
New York State Teacher of the Year, 1991

"We were making the future," he said, "and hardly any of us troubled to think what future we were making. And here it is!"

—The Sleeper Awakes

A surprising number of otherwise sensible people find it hard to see why the scope and reach of our formal schooling networks should not be increased—by extending the school day or year, for instance—in order to provide an economical solution to the problems posed by the decay of the American family. People who lean in this direction are all around right now. One reason for their preference, I think, is that they have trouble understanding the real difference between communities and networks, or even the difference between families and networks. Because of this confusion they conclude that replacing a bad network with a good one is the right way to go. Since I disagree so strongly with the fundamental premise that networks are workable substitutes for families, and because from anybody's point of view a lot more school is going to cost a lot more money, I thought I'd tell you why, from a schoolteacher's perspective, we shouldn't think more school but less.

People who admire our school institution usually admire networking in general and have an easy time seeing its positive side, but they overlook its negative

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aspect—that networks, even good ones, take the vitality from communities and families. They make solutions to human problems mechanical, "by the numbers", when a slow, organic process of self-awareness, self-discovery, and cooperation is what is required if any solution is to stick.

Think of the challenge of losing weight. It's possible to employ mechanical tricks to do this quickly, but I'm told that 95 percent of the poor souls who do are only fooling themselves, the weight lost this way doesn't stay off, it comes back in a short time. Other network solutions are just as temporary: think of a group of law students networking to pass their college exams, but preparing a brief in private practice is often a solitary, lonely thing, just as dealing with a burst appendix must be.

Aristotle saw, a long time ago, that fully participating in a complex range of human affairs was the only way to become fully human; in that he differed from Plato. What is gained from consulting a specialist and surrendering all judgment is often more than outweighed by a permanent loss of a piece of your volition. This discovery accounts for the curious texture of real communities, where people argue with their doctors, lawyers, and ministers, tell craftsmen what they want instead of accepting what they get, frequently make their own food from scratch instead of buying it in a restaurant or defrosting it, and perform many similar acts of participation. A real community is, of course, a collection of real families who themselves function in this participatory way.

Networks, however, don't need or want the whole person, but only a narrow piece of him; if you function in a network it asks you to suppress all the parts of yourself except the network-interest part—a highly unnatural act although one you can get used to doing it. In exchange the network will deliver efficiency in the pursuit of some limited aim. This will be seen to be a Devil's Bargain since on the promise of some future

gain you must surrender your present total humanity. It will also be seen that if you enter into too many of these bargains you have split yourself into many specialized pieces, none of them completely human. And no time is available to reintegrate them. This, ironically, is the destiny of many successful networkers and doubtless generates much business for divorce courts and therapists of a variety of persuasions.

The fragmentation caused by excessive networking creates diminished humanity, a sense our lives are out of control, because they are. If we face the present school and community crisis squarely, with hope of finding a better way, we need to accept that schools—as networks— create a large part of the agony of modern life. We don't need more schooling, we need less.

I expect you'll want some proof of that even though the million or so people participating in education at home these days have begun to nibble at the edge of everybody's consciousness in recent years and promise to bite their way into national attention when details of just how impressive their success is get around a little more. So for those of you who haven't heard that you don't need officially certified teachers in officially certified schools to get a good education, let me try to expose some of the machinery that makes certified schooling so bad. And remember if you're thinking, "but it's always been that way"...that it really hasn't. Compulsory schooling in factory schools is a very recent, very Massachusetts-New York development. Remember, too, that until 30 odd years ago you could escape mass-schooling *after* school, hut that now it is much harder to escape because another form of mass schooling—Television—has spread all over the place to blot up any time spared by School. So what was merely grotesque in our form of national treatment of the young before 1960 has become tragic now that mass commercial entertainment, as addictive as any other hallucinogenic drug, has blocked the escape routes from mass

schooling.

It is a fact generally ignored when considering the communal nature of institutional families like schools, large corporations, colleges, armies, hospitals and government agencies that they are not real communities at all, but networks. Unlike communities, networks—as I reminded you—have a very narrow way of allowing people to associate, and that way is always across a short spectrum of one, or at most a few, specific uniformities.

In spite of ritual moments like the Christmas Party or the office softball game, when individual human components in the network "go home," they go home alone. And in spite of humanitarian support from fellow workers that eases emergencies. when people in networks suffer they suffer alone unless they have a family or community to suffer with them.

Even with college dorm "communities," those most engaging and intimate simulations of community imaginable, who among us has not experienced an awful realization after graduation that we cannot remember our friends' names or faces very well? Or who, if he can remember, feels much desire to renew those associations?

It is a puzzling development, as yet poorly understood, that the "caring" in networks is in some important way feigned. Not maliciously, but in spite of any genuine emotional attractions that might be there, human behavior in network situations seems to become a dramatic act—a script produced to meet the demands of a story. And as such, the intimate moments in networks lack the sustaining value of their counterparts in community. Those of you who remember the wonderful closeness possible in army camp life or sports teams, and who have now forgotten those you were once close with, will understand what I mean. Have you ever forgotten an uncle or an aunt ?

If the loss of true community entailed by masquerading in networks is not noticed in time, a

condition arises in the victim's spirit very much like the "trout starvation" that used to strike wilderness explorers whose diet was exclusively stream fish. While trout quell the pangs of hunger—and even taste good—the eater gradually starves for want of sufficient calories.

Networks like schools are not communities in the same way that school training is not education. By preempting 50 percent of the total time of the young, by locking young people up with young people exactly their own age, by ringing bells to start and stop work, by asking people to think about the same thing at the same time in the same way, by grading people the way we grade vegetables—and in a dozen other vile and stupid ways—network schools steal the vitality of communities and replace it with an ugly piece of mechanism. Nobody survives these places with his humanity intact, not kids, not teachers, not administrators, and not parents.

A community is a place that faces people at each other over time in all their human variety, good parts, bad parts, and all the rest. Such places promote the highest quality of life possible, lives of engagement and participation. This hap-pens in unexpected ways but it never happens when you've spent more than a decade listening to other people *talk~* and trying to do what they tell you to do, trying to *please* them after the fashion of schools. It makes a real difference lifelong if you can avoid that training—or if it traps you.

Another instance might clarify this. Networks of urban reformers will convene to consider the problems of homeless vagrants, but a community will think of its vagrants as real people, not abstractions. "Ron," "Dave" or "Marty"—a community will call its bums by their names. It makes a difference.

People interact on thousands of invisible pathways in a community and the emotional payoff is correspondingly rich and complex. But networks can only manage a cartoon simulation of community and a very limited payoff.

I belong to some networks myself, of course, but the only ones I consider completely safe are the ones that reject their communitarian facade, acknowledge their limits, and concentrate solely on helping me do a specific and necessary task. But a vampire network like a school, which tears off huge chunks of time and energy needed for building community and family—and always asks for *more*— needs to have a stake driven through its heart and be nailed into its coffin. The feeding frenzy of formal schooling has already wounded us seriously in our ability to form families and communities by bleeding away time we need with our children and our children need with us. That's why I say we need less school, not more.

Who can deny that networks can get some jobs done? They do. But they lack any ability to nourish their members emotionally. The extreme *rationality* of networking at its core is based on the same misperception of human nature the French Enlightenment and Comte were guilty of. At our best we human beings are much, much grander things than rational, at our best we transcend rationality while incorporating its procedures on the lower levels of functioning. That is why computers will never replace people, computers are condemned to be rational, hence very limited. Networks divide people, first from themselves and then from each other, on the grounds that this is the efficient way to perform a task. It may well be, but it is a lousy way to feel good about being alive.

Networks make people lonely. They have no way to correct their inhuman functioning and still succeed as networks. Behind the anomaly that networks look like communities but are not lurks the grotesque secret of mass-schooling and the reason why enlarging the school domain will only aggravate dangerous conditions of social disintegration it is intended to correct.

I want to repeat this until you are sick of hearing it: Networks do great harm by appearing enough like real communities to create expectations that they can

manage human social and psychological needs. The reality is they cannot. Even associations as inherently harmless as bridge clubs, chess clubs, amateur acting groups or groups of social activists will, if they maintain a pretense of whole friendship, ultimately produce that odd sensation familiar to all city dwellers of being lonely in the middle of a crowd. Who has not felt this sensation who frequently networks? Having many networks does not add up to having a community, no matter how many you have or how often your telephone rings.

With a network, what you get at the beginning is all you ever get. Networks don't get better or worse, their limited purpose keeps them pretty much the same all the time, there just isn't much development possible. The pathological state which eventually develops out of these constant repetitions of thin human contact is a feeling that your "friends" and "colleagues" don't really care about you beyond what you can do for them, that they have no curiosity about the way you manage your life, no curiosity about your hopes, fears, victories, defeats. The real truth is that the "friends" falsely mourned for their indifference were never friends, only fellow networkers, from whom in fairness little should be expected beyond attention to the common interest.

But such is our unquenchable need for community and the unlikeliness of obtaining it in a network, that we are in desperation of any better solution, driven to deceive ourselves about the nature of these liaisons. Whatever "caring" really means, we all understand instinctively that it means something more than simple companionship or even the comradeship of shared interests.

In the growth of human society, families came first, communities second, and only much later came the institutions set up by the community to serve it. Most institutional rhetoric—the proclaiming of what is important—borrows its values from individual families that work well together.

Particularly over the past century and a half in

the United States spokesmen for institutional life have demanded a role above and beyond service to families and communities. They have sought to command and prescribe as kings used to do, though there is an important difference—in the case of ancient kings once beyond the range of their voices and trumpets you could usually do what you pleased, but in the case of modern institutions the reach of technology is everywhere—there is no escape if the place where you live and the family you live in cannot provide sanctuary.

Institutions, say their political philosophers, are better at creating marching orders for the human race than families are, therefore they should no longer be expected to follow but to lead. Institutional leaders have come to regard themselves as great synthetic Fathers to millions of synthetic Children, by which, I mean, to all of us. This theory sees us bound together in some abstract family relationship in which the State is the true Mother and Father, hence it insists on our first and best loyalty.

"Ask not," said President Kennedy, "what your country can do for you, but rather ask what you can do for your country." Since the "you" in question is both real and human, and the country you are alleged to possess one of the most extreme of verbal abstractions, it will readily be seen that the President's injunction is an expression of a synthetic family philosophy which regards "Nation" as possessing a claim superior to the claim of "Family." If you see nothing wrong with this, then it is probable you also believe that—with a little skillful tinkering—our schools will work just fine. But if you get a queer feeling at the image of yourself and family as appendages of an abstraction, then we are on the same wavelength. In the latter case, we are ready to consider that we may need less school, not more.

I want to examine the destructive effects the false claim of institutional prerogative has on both individual and family life, a destructiveness equally profound whether the claim comes from a government, a corporation, or from some other form of network.

If we return to our original discussion of networks it will be clear that every one of our national institutions is a place where men, women and children are isolated according to some limited aspect of their total humanity: by age, and a few other considerations in the case of compulsory schooling, by various other sorting mechanisms in other institutional arenas.

If performance in these limited roles is conceived to be the supreme measure of success, if, for instance, an "A" average is accounted the central purpose of adolescent life—the requirements for which take most of the time and attention of the aspirant—and the worth of the individual is reckoned by victory or defeat in this abstract pursuit, then a social machine has been constructed which, by attaching purpose and meaning to essentially meaningless and fantastic behavior, will certainly dehumanize the student, alienate him from his own human nature, and break the natural connection between him and his parents, to whom he would otherwise look for significant affirmations.

Welcome to the world of mass-schooling which sets this goal as its supreme achievement. Are you sure we want more of it ?

As we approach the 21st century it is correct to say that the U.S. has become a nation of institutions where it used to be a nation of communities. Large cities have great difficulty supporting healthy community life, partly because of the constant coming and going of strangers, partly because of space constrictions, partly because of poisoned environments, but mostly because of the constant competition of institutions and networks for the custody of children and old people, and to monopolize the time of everyone else in between. By reserving young and old from the working life of places, and by reserving the working population from the lives of young and old, a fundamental disconnection of the generations has occurred. The griefs that arise from this have no synthetic remedy and no vibrant, satisfying communities can come into being where young and old

are locked away.

Here and there mutilated versions of community struggle to survive, and in places where cultural homogeneity has been fiercely protected, as in Bensonhurst in Brooklyn or Polish Hill in Pittsburgh, something better than that—but in the main, "community" in cities and suburbs is a thin illusion, confined to simulations like street festivals. If you have moved from one neighborhood to another or from one suburb to another and have quickly forgotten the friends you left behind then you will have lived the phenomenon I refer to. Over 90 percent of the U.S. population now exists inside 50 urban aggregations. Having been concentrated there as the end product of fairly well understood historical processes, there they are denied a reciprocal part in any continuous, well articulated community. They are profoundly alienated from their own human interests. What else do you think the meaning is that only half our eligible citizens are registered to vote, and of that half, a bare 50 percent do vote? In two party jurisdictions a trifle over 1/8th of the citizenry is thus sufficient to elect public officials, assuming the vote splits 55-45. We've come a long way down the road to making optional what used to be regarded as duty, but that is what alienation from community life quickly accomplishes— indifference to almost everything.

When you are offered institutional simulations of community, when you are offered a steady diet of networks, involuntary like schools, or "voluntary" like isolated workplaces divorced from human variety, your basic human needs are placed in the gravest jeopardy, a danger magnified many times in the case of children. Institutional goals, however sane and well-intentioned, are unable to harmonize deeply with the uniqueness of individual human goals. No matter how good the individuals are who manage an institution, institutions lack a conscience because they measure by accounting methods. Institutions are not the sum total of their

personnel, or even of their leadership, but are independent of both and will exist after management has been completely replaced. They are ideas come to life, ideas in whose service all employees are but servo-mechanisms. The deepest purposes of these gigantic networks is to regulate and make uniform. Since the logic of family and community is to give scope to variety around a central theme, whenever institutions make a major intervention into personal affairs they cause much damage. By displacing the direction of life from families and communities to institutions and networks we, in effect, anoint a machine our King.

Nearly a century ago a French sociologist wrote that every institution's unstated first goal is to survive and grow, not to undertake the mission it has nominally staked out for itself. Thus the first goal of government postal service is to provide protection for its employees and perhaps a modest status ladder for the more ambitious ones, its first goal is not to deliver the mail. The first goal of a permanent military organization is not to fight wars but to secure, in perpetuity, a fraction of the national wealth to distribute to its personnel. By this relentless logic an adoption agency requires babies to justify its continuing existence and under such a dynamic it will seek to obtain babies one way or another, whether they "need" adopting or not.

It was this hidden aspect of teaching the young *for pay*—that such teaching would inevitably expand to protect the interests of teachers, not students, that made Socrates condemn the Sophists so strongly long ago in ancient Greece. If these examples trouble you, think of the New York City public school system where I work, one of the largest business organizations on planet Earth. While the education administered by this abstract parent is ill-regarded by everybody, the institution's right to *compel* its clientele to accept such dubious service is still guaranteed by the police. And forces are gathering to expand its reach still further—in the face of every evidence it has been a disaster for all its history.

What gives the atmosphere of remote country towns and other national backwaters a peculiarly heady quality of fundamental difference is not simply a radical change of scenery from city or suburb, but the promise offered of near-freedom from institutional intervention into family life. Big Father doesn't watch over such places closely. Where his presence is felt most is still in the schools, which even there grind out their relentless message of anger, envy, competition, and caste-verification in the form of grades and "classes." But a home-life and community exist there as antidote to the poison.

This business we call "Education" when we mean "Schooling" makes an interesting example of network values in conflict with traditional community values. For 150 years institutional educators have seen fit to offer that the main purpose of an education is an economic one.

Good education = good job, good money, good things. This has become the universal national formula, flogged by Harvards as well as high schools. This prescription makes both parent and student easier to regulate and intimidate as long as the connection goes unchallenged either for veracity or in its philosophical truth. Interestingly enough, the American Federation of Teachers identifies one of its missions as persuading the business community to hire and promote on the basis of school grades so that the grades = money formula will become true by definition as it was made for medicine and law the same way after years of political lobbying. So far, common sense of businessmen has kept them hiring and promoting the old-fashioned way, using private judgment and performance as the preferred measures, but they may not resist much longer.

The absurdity of defining education as an economic good becomes clear if we ask ourselves what is gained by perceiving education as a way to enhance even further the runaway consumption that threatens the earth, the air, the water and the atmosphere of our

planet. Should we continue to teach people that they can buy happiness in the face of a tidal wave of evidence that they cannot? Shall we ignore the evidence that drug addiction, alcoholism, teenage suicide, divorce and other despairs are pathologies of the prosperous much more than they are of the poor?

On this question of meanings we've hidden from ourselves for so long hangs both an understanding of the illness that is killing us and the cure we are searching for: What, after all this time, is the purpose of mass-schooling supposed to be? Reading, writing and arithmetic can't be the answer because properly approached those things take less than 100 hours to transmit—and we have abundant evidence that each is readily self-taught in the right setting and time.

What are we doing then locking these kids up in an involuntary network with strangers for 12 years? Surely not so a few of them can get rich! Even if it worked that way, and I doubt that it does, why wouldn't any sane community look on such an education as positively wrong, because it divides and classifies people, demanding that they compulsively compete with each other and publicly labels the losers by de-grading them literally, identifying them as "low-class" material? The bottom line for the winners is that they can buy more stuff! I don't believe that anyone who thinks about it feels comfortable with such a silly conclusion. I can't help feeling that if we could only answer the question of what it is exactly that we want from these kids we lock up, that we would suddenly see where we took a wrong turn, how we're going about getting what we want the wrong way. At that point I have enough faith in American imagination and resourcefulness to believe we'd come up with a better way—in fact, a whole supermarket of better ways.

One thing I do know, most of us who've had a taste of loving families, even a little taste, want our kids to be part of one. One other thing I know is that eventually you have to come to be part of a place, part of

its hills and streets and waters and people—or you will live a very, very sorry life as an exile forever. Discovering meaning for yourself, and discovering satisfying purpose for yourself is a big part of what education is. How this can be done by locking children away from the world is beyond me.

An important difference between communities and institutions is that communities have natural limits, they stop growing or they die. There's a good reason for that: in the best communities everyone is a special person who sooner or later impinges on everyone else's consciousness. The effects of this constant attention makes all, rich or poor, feel important because the only way importance is perceived is by having other folks pay attention to you. You can buy attention, of course, but it's not the same thing. Pseudo-community life, where you live around others without noticing them, and where you are constantly being menaced in some way by strangers you find offensive, is exactly the opposite. In pseudo-community life you are anonymous for the most part, and you want to be because of various dangers other people may represent if they notice your existence. Almost the only way you can get attention in a pseudo-community is to buy it because the prevailing atmosphere is one of indifference. A pseudo-community is just a different kind of network—its friendships and loyalties are transient, its problems are universally considered to be someone else's problems (someone else who should be paid to solve them); its young and old are largely regarded as annoyances, and the most common shared dream is to get out to a better place—to "trade up" endlessly.

Unlike true communities, pseudo-communities and other comprehensive networks like schools expand indefinitely just as long as they can get away with it. "More" may not be "better" but more is always more profitable for the people who make a living out of networking. That is what is happening today behind the cry to expand schooling even further, a great many

people are going to make a great deal of money if growth can be continued.

Unlike the intricate, sometimes unfathomable satisfactions of community and family life, networks always present their successes as mathematical displays of one-upmanship: "How many "A's?" How much weight lost?" "How many inquiries generated?" Competition is their lifeblood and the precision suggested by the numerical ranking of performance is their preferred style.

The quality-competition of businesses, when it happens, is generally a good thing for customers, it keeps everyone on his toes doing his best. The competition inside an institution like a school isn't the same thing at all. What is competed for in a school is the favor of a teacher and that can be won or lost by too many subjective parameters to count; it is always a little arbitrary and sometimes a lot more pernicious than that. It gives rise to envy, dissatisfaction, and a belief in magic. Teachers, too, must compete for the favor of administrators arbitrarily dispensed, carrying with it the promise of good or bad classes, good or bad rooms, access to tools or denial, and other hostages to obedience, deference, and subordination. The culture of schools only coheres in response to a web of material rewards and punishments: "A"s, "F's, bathroom passes, gold stars, "good" classes, access to a photocopy machine—everything we know about why people drive themselves to know things and do their best is contradicted inside these places.

Truth itself is another important dividing line between communities and networks. If you don't keep your word in a community everyone finds out and you have a major problem thereafter. But lying for personal advantage is the operational standard in all large institutions, it is considered part of the game in schools. Parents, for the most part, are always lied to or told half-truths; parents for the most part are considered adversaries, at least that's been true in every school I

ever worked in. Only the most foolish employees don't have recourse to lying since the penalties for being caught hardly exist—and the rewards for success can be considerable. Whistle-blowing against institutional malpractice is always a good way to get canned or relentlessly persecuted. Whistle-blowers never get promoted in any institution because, having served a public interest once, they may well do it again.

The Cathedral of Rheims is the best symbol I know of what a community can do and why we lose a lot when we don't know the difference between these human miracles and the social machinery we call networks. Rheims was built without power tools by people working day and night for 100 years. Everybody worked willingly, nobody was slave labor. No school taught cathedral building as a subject.

What possessed people to work together for a hundred years? Whatever it was looks like something worth educating ourselves about. We know the workers were profoundly united as families of friends, and as friends they knew what they really wanted in the way of a church. Popes and archbishops had nothing to do with it; Gothic architecture itself was invented out of sheer aspiration, the Gothic cathedral stands like a lighthouse illuminating what is possible in the way of uncoerced human union. It provides a benchmark against which our own lives can be measured.

At Rheims, the serfs and farmers and peasants filled gigantic spaces with the most incredible stained glass windows in the world but they never bothered to sign even one of them. Neither Harvard nor anybody else knows who designed them or made them because our modern form of institutional boasting did not yet exist as a corruption of communitarian feeling. After all these centuries they still announce what being human really means.

Communities are collections of families and friends who find major meaning in extending the family association to a band of honorary brothers and sisters,

they are complex relationships of mutual job and obligation which generalize to others beyond the perimeter of the homestead.

When the integration of life that comes from being part of a family in a community is unattainable, the only alternative, apart from accepting a life in isolation, is to search for an artificial integration into one of the many expressions of network currently available. It's a bad trade and we should begin thinking about school reform by stopping these places from functioning like cysts, impenetrable, insular bodies that take our money, our children, and our time and give nothing back.

Artificial integration that controls human associations—think of those college dorms or fraternities— appears strong but is actually quite weak; seems close-knit but in reality its bonds are loose; suggests durability but is usually transient. And it is most often badly adjusted to what people need although it masquerades as being exactly what they need. Welcome to the world of school. Do we really want more of it? I don't.

In recent years I've given much thought to the problem of turning the compulsory school network into some kind of emotionally rewarding community because a move seems to be afoot to do the reverse, to enlarge substantially the bite that schooling takes out of a young person's family time, community time, and private time. Trial balloons are floated constantly about this in the press and on TV, that means that some important groups are preparing to extend the reach of compulsory schooling in the face of its genuinely ghastly record. My Jewish friends would call that *chutzpa* but I take it as an index of just how confident these people are that they can pull it off.

Schools, I hear it argued, would make better sense and be better value as 9-5 operations or even 9-9 ones, working year-round. We're not a farming community any more, I hear, that we need to give kids time off to tend the crops. This New World Order Schooling would

serve dinner, provide evening recreation, offer therapy, medical attention, and a whole range of other services which would convert the institution into a true synthetic family for children—better than the original one for many poor kids, it is said, and this will level the playing field for the sons and daughters of weak families.

Yet it appears to me as a schoolteacher that schools are already a major cause of weak families and weak communities. They separate parents and children from vital interaction with each other and from true curiosity about each other's lives. Schools stifle family originality by appropriating the critical time needed for any sound idea of family to develop—then they blame the family for its failure to be a family. It's like a malicious person lifting a photograph from the developing chemicals too early, then pronouncing the photographer incompetent.

A Massachusetts Senator said a while ago that his state had a better literacy rate before it adopted compulsory schooling than after. It's certainly an idea worth considering whether or not schools didn't reach the limits of their possible efficiency long ago, and that "more" for schools will make things worse, instead of better.

Whatever an education is, it should make you a unique individual, not a conformist; it should furnish you with an original spirit with which to tackle the big challenges; it should allow you to find values that will be your road map through life; it should make you spiritually rich, a person who loves wherever he is, whoever he is with, whatever he is doing; it should teach you what is important, how to live and how to die.

What's gotten in the way of education in the United States is a theory of social engineering that says there is ONE RIGHT WAY to proceed with growing up. That's an Egyptian idea symbolized by the pyramid with an eye on top that's on the other side of George Washington on our one-dollar bill. Everyone a stone defined by his position in the pyramid. This theory has

been presented in many different ways but at bottom it signals the world view of minds obsessed with the control of other minds, obsessed by dominance and strategies of intervention to maintain that dominance.

It might have worked for ancient Egypt but it certainly hasn't worked very well for us. Indeed, nothing in the historical record provides evidence that any one idea should dominate the developmental time of all the young, and yet aspirants to monopolize this time have never been closer to winning the prize. The humming of the great hive society foreseen by Francis Bacon and by H. G. Wells in *The Sleeper Awakes* has never sounded louder than it does to us right now.

The heart of a defense for the cherished American ideals of privacy, of a man's home being his castle, of variety and individuality lies in the way we bring up our young. CHILDREN LEARN WHAT THEY LIVE. Put the kid in a class and he will live out his life in an invisible cage, isolated from his chance at community; interrupt the kid with bells and horns all the time and he will learn that nothing is important; force him to plead for the natural right to go to the toilet and he will become a liar and a toady, ridicule him and he will retreat from human association, shame him and he will find a hundred ways to get even.

CHILDREN LEARN WHAT THEY LIVE

IF A CHILD LIVES WITH CRITICISM,
HE LEARNS TO CONDEMN.
IF A CHILD LIVES WITH HOSTILITY,
HE LEARNS TO FIGHT.
IF A CHILD LIVES WITH RIDICULE,
HE LEARNS TO BE SHY.
IF A CHILD LIVES WITH SHAME,
HE LEARNS TO FEEL GUILTY.
IF A CHILD LIVES WITH TOLERANCE,
HE LEARNS TO BE PATIENT.
IF A CHILD LIVES WITH
ENCOURAGEMENT,
HE LEARNS CONFIDENCE.
I F A CHILD LIVES WITH PRAISE,
HE LEARNS TO APPRECIATE.
IF A CHILD LIVES WITH FAIRNESS,
HE LEARNS JUSTICE.
IF A CHILD LIVES WITH SECURITY,
HE LEARNS TO HAVE FAITH.
IF A CHILD LIVES WITH APPROVAL,
HE LEARNS TO LIKE HIMSELF.
IF A CHILD LIVES WITH ACCEPTANCE
AND FRIENDSHIP,
HE LEARNS TO FIND LOVE IN THE WORLD.

-DOROTHY LAW NOLTE

The habits taught in large scale organizations like schools are deadly. Think for a minute, by definition individuality, family, and community are expressions of singular organization, never of one-right-way thinking on the grand scale. Private time is absolutely essential if a private identity is going to develop, and private time is equally essential to the development of a code of private values— without which we aren't really individuals at all. Children and families need some relief from government surveillance and intimidation if original expressions belonging to them are to develop. Without these freedom has no meaning.

The lesson of my teaching life is that the structure and theory of mass-education is fatally flawed, it cannot work to support the democratic logic of our national idea because it is unfaithful to the democratic principle. Ours is still the best idea for a nation there is, even though we aren't living up to it right now.

Mass-education cannot work to produce a fair society because its daily practice is practice in rigged competition, suppression and intimidation. The schools we've allowed to happen can't work to teach non-material values, the values which give meaning to everyone's life, rich or poor, because the structure of schooling is held together by a Byzantine tapestry of reward and threat, of carrots and sticks. Those things have no connection with education—working for official favor, grades, or other trinkets of subordination, that is—they are the paraphernalia of servitude, not freedom.

Mass-schooling damages children. We don't need any more of it. And under the disguise that it is the same thing as education, it has been picking our pockets just as Socrates predicted it would thousands of years ago. One of the surest ways to recognize education is that it doesn't cost very much, it doesn't depend on expensive toys or gadgets; the experiences that produce it and the self awareness that propels it are nearly free, in fact. You can see it is hard to turn a dollar on education although schooling is a wonderful hustle, getting better

every day:

Sixty-five years ago Bertrand Russell, the greatest mathematician of this century, its greatest philosopher, and a close relation of the King of England to boot, saw that mass- schooling in the United States had a radically anti-democratic intent, that it was a scheme to artificially deliver national unity by eliminating human variation, and by eliminating the forge that produces variation: the Family. According to Lord Russell, mass-schooling produced a recognizably American student: anti-intellectual, superstitious, lacking self confidence—with less of what Russell called "inner freedom" than in the citizens of any other nation he knew of, past or present. These schooled children become citizens, he said, with a thin "mass character", holding excellence and aesthetics equally in contempt, inadequate to the personal crises of their lives. He wrote that in 1926.

American national unity has always been the central problem of American life, that was inherent in our synthetic beginnings and in the conquest of a continental land mass. It was true in 1790 and it is just as true, perhaps even truer, 200 years later. Somewhere around the time of the Civil War we began to try shortcuts to get the unity we wanted faster, by artificial means. Compulsory schooling was one of those shortcuts, perhaps the most important one. "Take hold of the children!" said John Cotton back in colonial Boston and that seemed such a good idea, eventually the people who looked at "Unity" almost as if it were a religious idea did that. It took 30 years to beat down an opposition which was fierce, but by the 1880s it had come to pass—"they" had the children. For the last 110 years, the one-right-way crowd has been trying to figure out what to do with the children and they still don't know. Time to try something different.

"Good fences make good neighbors," said Robert Frost. The natural solution to learning to live together in a community is first to learn to live apart as individuals and as families. Only when you feel good about yourself

can you feel good about others. But we attacked the problem mechanically, as though we could force an engineering solution by crowding the various families and communities under the broad, homogenizing umbrella of institutions like compulsory schools. In working this scheme the democratic ideas that were the only justification for our national experiment were betrayed. The attempt at a shortcut continues, and it ruins families and communities now just as it always did then. Rebuild these things and young people will begin to educate themselves—with our help—just as they did at the nation's beginning. They don't have anything to work for now except money and that's never been a first-class motivator, as our Vietnam War experience should have taught us. Break up these institutional schools, decertify teaching, let anyone who has a mind to teach bid for customers, privatize this whole business—trust the free market system. I know it's easier to say than to do, but what other choice do we have? We need less school, not more.

Pat Farenga, Dan Greenberg, Dave Lehman and Mary Leue back stage at Carnegie Hall - photo by Hanna Greenberg (Ithink)

- HOW TO GET AN EDUCATION AT HOME -
Presented at "The Exhausted School."
11/1/91 Carnegie Hall, NY.
by Patrick Farenga, Holt Associates

There is a revolution going on in education, but it is not happening in schools. It is happening in the homes of American families in every state. It is happening every time a family decides to help its children learn at home instead of sending them to school! Fourteen years ago there were roughly 10,000 children being homeschooled; now there are upwards of 600,000 children learning at home. If you and your children are not pleased with your schools and you are tired of waiting for them to change, then you can do something *now* and join the growing ranks of people who homeschool.

It is impossible to generalize about the "typical" homeschooling family any more than you can about the "typical" family whose children attend schools. Homeschoolers include traditional, middle-class two parent households, single parents, low income families, families with parents or children who have physical disabilities, and two-income families. Some homeschool solely for religious reasons, some homeschool solely for pedagogical reasons. Many homeschool for mixtures of both reasons, and many others homeschool simply because they enjoy being with their children and watching them learn. Some homeschoolers live on rural communes; others live in midtown Manhattan. Some homeschooling parents have only high school diplomas, others have doctorates. It is not necessary to have a teaching certificate to homeschool effectively. None of these examples are conjectural: families homeschooling under these and other conditions have been writing to us at *Growing Without Schooling* with their stories for over fourteen years. All sorts of people homeschool and you can too.

You might think that homeschooled children are

limited by their parents' expertise, experience, and knowledge. If we view teaching as the filling up of empty bottles with the teacher's knowledge, then this concern makes sense. With only one or two people pouring into the child's "bottle" it makes sense that the child will only learn what they pour in. However, homeschooling allows you to depart from the "bottle" model of school learning and follow a different concept of how children learn.

My friend, the late John Holt, wrote about how people learn throughout his ten books about education. He spent the better part of his life demonstrating that we can trust children to learn all the time. John observed that for children under school age, living and learning are interconnected, but once they enter school, the two are separated. Learning is supposed to take place in special buildings called schools, and living takes place outside of school. But from the moment children are born they learn from everything they have access to, not Just from special teachers and places. Children learn to walk and talk with little or no formal teaching from us parents. Several studies have noted that homeschooled children consistently test at or above grade level when compared to their schooled agemates, *regardless* of the degrees attained or teacher certification of their parents. Washington, Alaska, and Alabama are three states that have studied and reported this. This proves not only that we can trust our children to learn, but that we can trust ourselves to be effective teachers for our children

"But I'm not good at math you may be thinking. "How could I be a good homeschooling parent?" First, homeschoolers use a wide variety of resources and learning materials. Some feel more comfortable beginning with a fairly traditional curriculum, and many different ones are readily available. Other families follow a less conventional approach, learning according to their own timetables and taking advantage of individual learning. Many parents find homeschooling greatly stimulates their own thinking and creativity and

provides them with new learning opportunities. Homeschoolers also think very hard about friends, relations, neighbors, and co-workers who have expertise in areas their children want to explore. We hear many stories about how nonfamily members offer considerable help with a child's home education. One child decided she wanted to learn more math than her mother was familiar with. Her mother found a math tutor for her. Another story is about how a boy learned a great deal about computer programming from adults he met at his church and through Scouts. Amber Clifford, a sixteen year old homeschooler from Missouri, wrote to us about her Interest in archaeology, something, her parents know nothing about.

> I was able to do the reading and studying on my own, but my parents helped me find the resource people that I needed and took me to the places that I needed to see. We're in a town with a university, so when I was Interested In fossils, my mother called the geology department and got the professor to talk to me. I didn't know how to go about finding someone, and she did, so this is where she was really helpful to me."

Some of you may feel that the children I am describing are special, that homeschoolers are taking the best and most motivated children out of school and leaving school with the dregs. The fact is that many of the children now flourishing in homeschools *were not* flourishing in school. Some parents began homeschooling children who had been labeled "learning disabled" in school and they watched their children lose their LD behavior. Other homeschoolers have children for whom school was not challenging enough, and they teach them at home using materials and experiences that match their needs. Some homeschooled children are late readers, not learning to read until they are ten or so. Grant Colfax, a homeschooled child who graduated from Harvard and is now in medical school, didn't learn to read until he was nine. Woodrow Wilson,

who was homeschooled, learned to read when he was eleven. Children like Colfax and Wilson develop other talents and skills while they are young and when they do learn to read they do so without special difficulty. In school these late readers would be immediately segregated and treated for these academic deficiencies, and they would be held back from other learning opportunities until they could read at their grade level. It is simply not true that all homeschoolers would be winners in school anyway.

Despite the diversity of methods and reasons for homeschooling, there is one thing each and every homeschooler has in common. They are all asked, "How will your children be socialized if they don't go to school?"

Homeschooling allows children to participate and learn in the real world. It allows them to mix with much younger and much older people, take courses as they want or need them, and apprentice with people they can learn from in the community. Homeschoolers play with their friends in their neighborhood and make friends with other homeschoolers. A young homeschooler in Pennsylvania wrote to us about her experiences volunteering at a home for disabled kids; a family from California wrote to us about their son's work in a soup kitchen. Many families write to us about how their children participate in community theater, give music lessons to younger children in their neighborhood, or share hobbies with fellow enthusiasts of all ages. Homeschoolers have apprenticed at historical societies, veterinarians' offices, architectural firms, nature centers, and many other places. Serena Gingold, a homeschooled youngster from California, wrote to us about her involvement in local politics.

> I've written letters to the editor about my opinions. You really learn a lot about opinions when you publicly voice your own. I've also been publicly criticized, and my county fair projects were censored because they were "too political"

(actually because I was too political for a kid!). One letter in the paper criticized me for being a kid and having opinions! People always say I should go to school so I can learn about the real world, but I'm *living* in the real world !

Certainly group experiences *are* a big part of education, and homeschoolers have plenty of them. Homeschoolers write to us about how they form or join writing clubs, book discussion groups, and local homeschooling support groups. Homeschoolers also take part in school sports teams and music groups, as well as the many public and private group activities our communities provide. For example, Kristin Williams of Michigan recently wrote to our magazine, *Growing Without Schooling* about how they meet many different types of people. "We're a Black family living in a racially and economically mixed neighborhood," she writes,

> ...We don't really go out looking. for people who are different from ourselves. Many come through the family: a cousin has an Arab-American girlfriend, another had a Japanese mother-in-law, another is married to an Afro-Canadian, one to a Polish-American, still another to a Jamaican and one to a Nigerian.

She writes how through church, 4-H club, and neighbors they have encountered and enjoyed many different types of people. At home they play tapes of foreign music, listen to overseas shortwave radio broadcasts, cook ethnic foods, and go to international fairs and multi-cultural worship services. Homeschoolers can and do experience other people and cultures without going to school.

The flip-side of socialization is solitary reflection. Homeschooling allows children to have some time alone, time to pursue their own thoughts and interests. Children, like adults, need time to be alone, to think, to muse, to read freely, to daydream, to be creative, to form a self independent of the barrage of mass culture.

A British man once remarked to me how amazing

it was to him that Americans expect schools to socialize their children. "I always thought the social graces were taught at home." he said. This observation is supported by a recent study in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. This study tracked how childhood experiences - in and out of school - affected adult development over a 36 year period. The study concluded that the only factor that showed a significant effect by itself on children's social maturity and their later social accomplishment as adults was "parental warmth and affection."

You may find that you teach your children at home for just a semester, for a year, or forever. The choice is yours, not school's. The entry or re-entry of homeschooled children into the classroom appears to be no different than for those who transfer into a school from another district.

Homeschooling works because *schooling is not the same as education*. School is not the only place to learn, to grow up. Universities and colleges recognize this fact whenever they admit homeschoolers who have never attended school. Homeschoolers who never attended, or rarely attended, any schools are currently students at Harvard, Boston University, Rice University, and the Curtis Institute of Music, to name a few. In addition, homeschoolers who decide *not* to go to college are finding adult work without special difficulty. Some of the homeschoolers I know who fall into this category are currently employed in the fields of computers, ballet, theater, movies, aviation, construction and overseas missionary work.

Consider these famous people who were homeschooled for some or all of their school years:

- authors William Blake, Charles Dickens, Pearl Buck, Agatha Christie and Margaret Atwood;
- social and political figures Benjamin Franklin, Woodrow Wilson, Winston Churchill, Samuel Gompers, Charles Lindbergh, Florence

Nightingale;
- artists Andrew Wyeth, Yehudi Menuhin, Sean O'Casey, Charlie Chaplin, Claude Monet, and Noel Coward;
- inventors Thomas Edison and the Wright brothers.

One of the world's richest men, the man for whom this hall is named, Andrew Carnegie, was homeschooled until he was nine. He was coaxed Into attending school after that, but by the age of thirteen Carnegie left school and never went back. School attendance is not the only way to become a successful, sociable adult.

Vita Wallace, a homeschooler from Pennsylvania, wrote these words when she turned 16 and officially graduated from homeschooling: "The most important thing I think I have gained through my education is that I know what I love to do. I think if I had gone to school I wouldn't have had time to find out. I know it's awfully confusing for people, when after graduating from thirteen years of schooling, they still don't know. ...I've been able to make friends with all kinds of different people - people younger, the same age, and older than I am, my teachers, colleagues and students, my neighbors young and old, my parents' friends, my brothers friends and teachers, and most important, my brother. He's been my best friend all along, and I am so glad we didn't go to school if only for the one reason that we might not have been able to be such bosom buddies otherwise.. ."

Homeschooling is not the panacea to all our educational problems, but it *is* part of the answer. It is a proven option for any of you who wish to try it.

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Mary Leue giving her speech (this photo and the one of John speaking taken by Connie Frisbee- Houde)

THE FREE SCHOOL COMMUNITY AS LEARNING RESOURCE FOR CONSCIOUS LIVING
Presented at "The Exhausted School," 11/13/91 Carnegie Hall, NY.
by Mary M. Leue

I want to start with a kind of footnote. What most of you may not know is that about three weeks ago John presented a magnificent workshop in Albany on the day before his keynote speech at the State Association of School Boards conference. Chris Mercogliano, the co-director of our school, was all set to give John a glowing introduction - but John, being John, and not knowing that, just dove in and started ahead on his own. So I'd like to deliver Chris' introduction for him. I think it's a terrific statement about John, too good to waste. Chris wrote it out for me, so here it is.

> The other day I found myself telling some of the younger kids at school the old folk tale The Emperor's New Clothes. You probably remember that it was a child in the village who cried out, "He has nothing on at all!," thereby breaking the thick spell of denial being paraded by the emperor and all of his loyal - and frightened - subjects. Well, there is a magical child alive and well inside John Gatto who is the source of his giftedness as a teacher, and who is now hell-bent on seeing to it that our schools do not grind the magic out of yet another generation of our children. John is a man with a mission, and I pray that the spell that has settled over our teachers and our educational institutions has not already become so widespread that it cannot be broken. If anyone can do it, John and his growing band of merry men and women can!

In the sense that Chris is using the term, I believe we are all magical children, now grown up. It is to be hoped that we still remember our childhoods and thus can stay open to allowing *our* children to grow up living out their magical heritage, not just grow up to become unconscious products of our own pasts as so many adults have done. And in this context, I need here

to pay a special tribute to my most important personal teachers - my mother and father, the two most remarkable people I have ever known. They read to us throughout all the years of our childhood, taught us wilderness skills, recognition of birds, wild plants and trees, and geological features of the land. With them we went camping, ocean sailing, mountain-climbing, rock-climbing and skiing. From them I have learned whatever I may have of love of learning, respect for childhood, courage, integrity, curiosity, persistence, discrimination, and cultural breadth. It was at their insistence that I graduated from high school on the high honor roll, from Bryn Mawr College with an A.B. degree, and from the Children's Hospital School of Nursing in Boston, Massachusetts. Their lessons are still bearing fruit for me.

At our school we recognize our debts to many educators from the past who understood childhood: such as the eighteenth century thinker Jean Jacques Rousseau; his contemporary, the Swiss Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, whose beliefs were brought to America by Joseph Neef in 1808; Friedrich Froebel, who worked with and adopted Pestalozzi's insights about childhood as the basis for his concept of children as needing to grow like flowers in a carefully tended garden - a garden of children. The rich experiences provided for children by the Waldorf schools that follow the teachings of Rudolph Steiner are another source from which we draw, as well as the insights of Maria Montessori and John Dewey. Most immediately, we take inspiration from the self-regulatory libertarianism of A.S. Neill and the humanistic insights into the souls of the children of the ghetto contained in the writings of George Dennison.

We believe that working with children demands a trained and very keen eye and ear attuned to one's inner truth as well as a willingness to live in the child's own world as a participant observer. In the world that is emerging around us, this need for self-knowledge seems

to us to go all too often unmet. We believe it is this unmet need to know ourselves at a deep level which is the chief missing ingredient in a cultural dilemma that is approaching crisis stage as our traditional support systems - the family and the community - break down at an accelerating rate. We are becoming inundated as a society by a tidal wave of acute problems such as alcoholism, drug addiction, criminality and psychosis - as well as characterological problems like co-dependency, narcissism, sociopathy, neurosis and chronic physiological imbalances of all sorts.

This breakdown process has been defined by John Bradshaw, among others, as arising from the neglect of the feelings - the grief, rage and fear - felt by the neglected inner child and has suggested that it is this neglect which creates such havoc in our adult lives. This might be called the negative side of the magic of childhood. The damage even involves our societal patterns of giving birth - not just the education of our children in schools. Michel Odent, a French research-minded obstetrician has had many years of working with, rather than against, the wisdom of the natural body during birth. His work demonstrates the madness of our technologized system of obstetrical management which has resulted in nearly half of all hospital births ending in Cesarean section. It is to this entire range of issues that we in our school and our community are attempting to address ourselves.

Thus, during the 22 years of our existence, we have grown from a handful of parents who had a dream of democratic education and started a little school in the inner city of Albany in 1969, to a multi-generational community with the school as its center. Everything we have grown to be in those two-plus decades has come into being in response to needs we have experienced as essential to a model of life that makes sense in human terms, a model that works. In this process we have grown rich! No, not in monetary terms, but in the real values that make life a vital experience.

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Free School kids posed by a photographer to demonstrate their involvement with the farm aspect of the school - so much for spontaneity! They loved it!

Our school is one of the oldest urban free schools in the country. In the setting of this all-embracing community, the Free School is far more a community center and less a traditional institution. We don't select children; we accept whoever comes. Similarly, we don't hire teachers; we accept whoever comes. Then we teach them how to be with us. Our community has a simple criterion for evaluating those who are drawn to us: namely, that they take us seriously enough to come, stay and learn. Most of our teachers have lived in the community for ten years or more.

Learning flows naturally out of the community atmosphere and is much less a goal in itself. Skills learning - which the children love - takes very little time in the total scheme, and activities such as putting on plays, making puppets, singing, doing sports, watching movies, reading out loud, playing games, and doing crafts, take up most of it. The adults have as much fun as the children, and staff burnout is unknown among us. One very important element we offer our children, both by experience and by example, is an awareness that "You can do it!" Children who leave us after two or three years have a rare natural sense of confidence, dignity and leadership.

But the school is only one setting for the learning activities in which our children are involved, just as we, the adults in the community, are only some of the people from whom our kids are free to learn or take inspiration. We have a small farm in the community, and kids help take care of our animals. We have two hundred acres of wilderness land recently donated to the school which is now part of our lives and will be even more so as time goes by and our presence there becomes even more a daily part of who we are.

Wilhelm Reich said, "Love, work and knowledge are the wellsprings of life. They should also govern it." The principles by which our community lives and by which it is governed are indeed love, work and knowledge. Two things could be said to define us as a

community: **work democracy** and **total mutual support** for families.

The term *work democracy*, coined by Reich, is used to describe criteria for community on the basis of need and obligation. It is a pragmatic definition of peer-level status among adults and between adults and children, both in the community and in the school.

Total mutual support means that everyone in the community plays roles usually assigned to specialists. That has meant taking on many more roles than most people think of doing, as a way of simplifying our lives as a community. We all teach, take care of one another's children, doctor them, take responsibility for their behavior, look upon them as our joint responsibility. We do the same things with each other, as families, and gradually we have taught ourselves how to play all of these roles more effectively .

We have learned through experience what community problems to tackle ourselves and what to leave to someone with specialized skills. And we have learned ways that work better than the societally approved ones in the crucial areas of maternity, parenting, and education. Taking over these support roles as we have has meant that our very limited incomes go a lot further than one would expect - and that we work very hard. But over time, we have also learned to increase our joint prosperity and pleasure in other ways.

We have a monthly parenting support group and a cooperative prenatal support group for pregnant couples as well as labor coaching in the hospital. And we have developed a number of additional group resources that allow us to focus on improving our relationship patterns, including personal growth and growth as couples and as parents. We have, for example, a weekly therapeutic group that serves many community functions and, most crucially, gives us a way of steadily deepening our contact with one another.

Six years ago we set up a pooled investment,

insurance and loan group of the kind usually called a Mondragon group which has provided community families with improvement loans of various kinds and has also paid a large part of our teachers' medical expenses. We also have our own natural foods store at discount prices, a small bookstore, a library, and a large audio and video tape library, as well as a wooden boat-building shop and a clothing manufacturing business owned by members of the community. One of our families is also a husband-wife legal firm, and two of us who are R.N.'s as well as teachers also play the roles of barefoot doctor and triage agent.

Finding money to live on has always been a joint responsibility, since the school belongs to us all. The school doesn't really pay salaries to its teachers in the sense businesses usually mean by that term; rather, we divide up the income, with adequate allocations for the needs of the property itself. In addition to ten buildings clustered in a two-block area of downtown Albany owned by the school (income from which constitutes about two-thirds of the school's economic base), families in some way associated with the school own an additional ten buildings in the area and consider themselves part of the Free School community.

Beside describing our school and community in terms of what we *do*, I want also to emphasize my belief that it has been important for us to understand *why* we do what we do, not just *that* we do it. We are all engaged in an on-going process of creating a model of life that includes adults in families, includes adult activities and skills practiced right in the community, and includes teaching kids adult models in both characterological and occupational forms. Like the saying attributed to Dewey, we are learning to do by doing.

So why is it important to ask why we do it? What's wrong with just doing? What's wrong is lack of awareness - or mindfulness, to use the Buddhist expression. Being members of the society of the industrialized west, most of us are functional extraverts,

and as such, are largely incapable of serving as adequate models for children, we believe. Our own learned inner models of reality which operate *beneath* the level of "doing" have far more of an impact on kids than most of us feel comfortable in acknowledging, yet there is very little institutional support for becoming aware of this level of experience which comes primarily from the culture of our parents, and can only be discovered by the development of inner knowing on our own. Often acquiring such inner knowing involves a willingness to feel one's residual pain.

And yet, both as parents and as teachers, we teach *who we are*, not just what we think or what we give children to do. Many titular adults are unwilling to take this fact into account when they are dealing with children. We fail to compare what we may *think* we are teaching kids with what they are actually *getting* from us. Doing that involves a willingness to stay attuned to our inner truth no matter how painful that may be, as well as a willingness to live in the child's own world as participant observers, not just follow a model.

It is in this sense that we consider ourselves a multi-generational learning community. We take what we need to learn from our own histories to round out our experiences of ourselves as fully conscious beings; and we do our best to use the learnings derived from our individual histories to help in the process of creating a shared future for everyone both as individual families and as a community. It's not a way that works for everyone - but perhaps it is a little like what Joe Campbell says of marriage: "Marriage" he says, "is not about happiness but about transformation." Or as one of our own members said recently, "It's like having twenty lovers!"

NOTE: Pat's and my talks are only a small part of what was presented in Carnegie Hall that November evening. ΣΚΟΑΕ will print the others in future issues as they come in. It was all pure gold, and no individual contribution can be singled out apart from all the others. Maybe we'll end up publishing it as a booklet.

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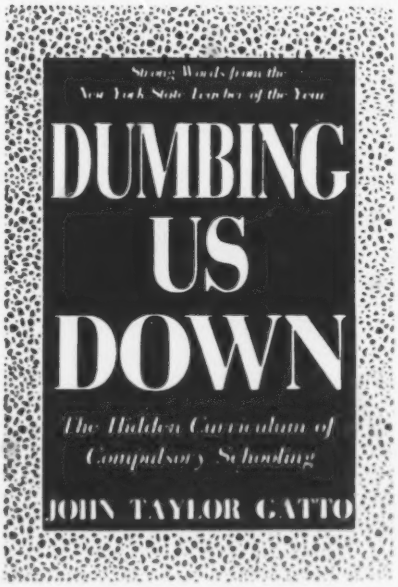

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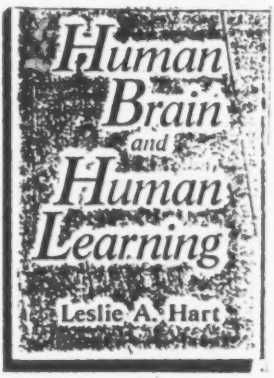
By the author of ***HUMAN BRAIN AND HUMAN LEARNING:***



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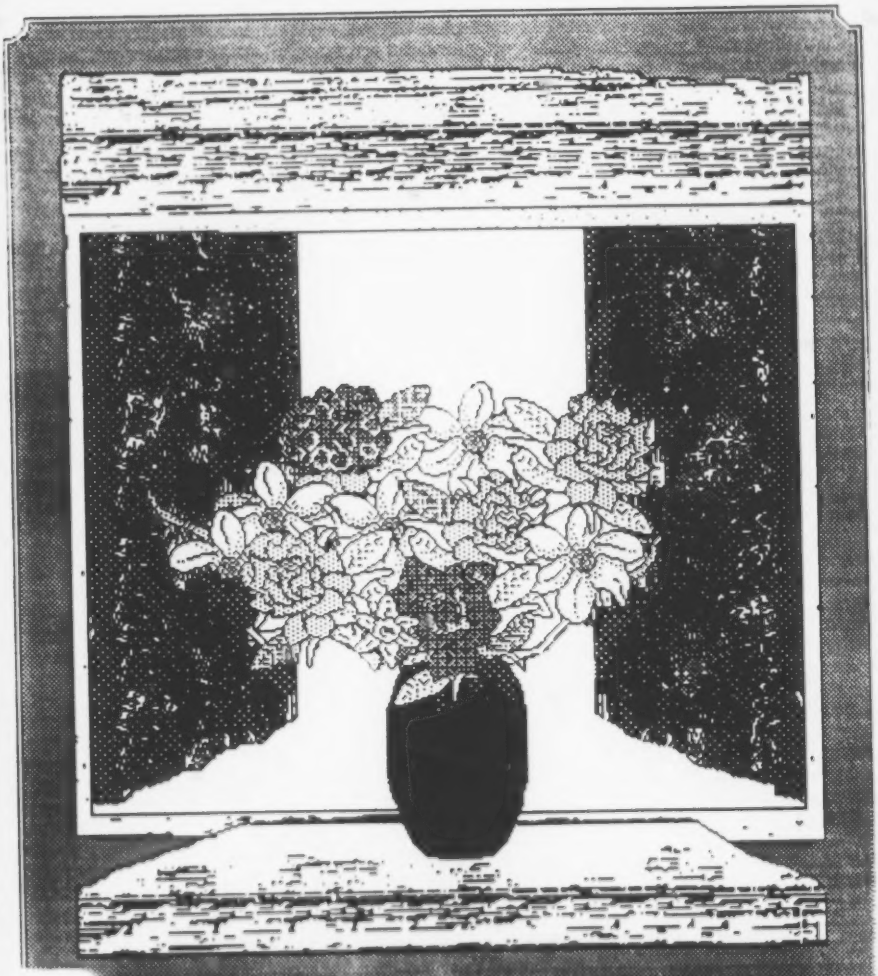

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DOWN-TO-EARTH BOOKS
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ΣΚΟΛΕ("Sko-lay," meaning "school" as defined by the ancient Greeks, an activity conducted on an on-going basis, as part of the awakening of awareness and contact with one's world) appears twice a year. It publishes articles related to the subject of alternatives or innovations in education, critiques of other forms of education, theoretical considerations associated with schools, schooling, learning and teaching, as well as accounts of individual schools themselves and "how-to" articles. We welcome manuscripts by educators, interested by-standers, parents and thoughtful students of all ages. Interesting photographs showing activities connected with learning-teaching are in great demand. I used to say they wouldn't be returned, but I haven't been getting any at all - so now I will, I will! Please send me some pictures!

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EDITORIAL COMMENT:

In this issue of **ΣΚΟΛΕ,** we print the remaining texts of the speeches given in Carnegie Hall last November, as promised. You will be happy to know that the reverberations of that event are still ringing throughout the land!

Additionally, this issue has as its main theme the subject of community. John Taylor Gatto's essay on family and community (the entirety of which is given in the Winter, 1992, issue of **ΣΚΟΛΕ**) is the most eloquent, the most comprehensive, statement on the subject I've yet come across. I'd like to quote somewhat extensively from some of the more relevant comments on the differences between communities and networks:

> One thing I do know, most of us who've had a taste of loving families, even a little taste, want our kids to be part of one. One other thing I know is that eventually you have to come to be part of a place, part of its hills and streets and waters and people — or you will live a very, very sorry life as an exile forever. Discovering meaning for yourself, and discovering satisfying purpose for yourself is a big part of what education is. How this can be done by locking children away from the world is beyond me.
>
> An important difference between communities and institutions is that communities have natural limits, they stop growing or they die. There's a good reason for that: in the best communities everyone is a special person who sooner or later impinges on everyone else's consciousness. The effects of this constant attention makes all, rich or poor, feel important because the only way importance is perceived is by having other folks pay attention to you. You can buy attention, of course, but it's not the same thing. ... In pseudo-community life you are anonymous for the most part, and you want to be because of various dangers other people may represent if they notice your existence. Almost the only way you can get attention in a pseudo-community is to buy it because the prevailing atmosphere is one of indifference. A pseudo-community is just a different kind

of network—its friendships and loyalties are transient, its problems are universally considered to be someone else's problems (someone else who should be paid to solve them); its young and old are largely regarded as annoyances, and the most common shared dream is to get out to a better place—to "trade up" endlessly...

Truth itself is another important dividing line between communities and networks. If you don't keep your word in a community everyone finds out and you have a major problem thereafter. But lying for personal advantage is the operational standard in all large institutions, it is considered part of the game in schools. Parents, for the most part, are always lied to or told half-truths; parents for the most part are considered adversaries, at least that's been true in every school I ever worked in. Only the most foolish employees don't have recourse to lying since the penalties for being caught hardly exist—and the rewards for success can be considerable. Whistle-blowing against institutional malpractice is always a good way to get canned or relentlessly persecuted. Whistle-blowers never get promoted in any institution because, having served a public interest once, they may well do it again.

The Cathedral of Rheims is the best symbol I know of what a community can do and why we lose a lot when we don't know the difference between these human miracles and the social machinery we call networks. Rheims was built without power tools by people working day and night for 100 years. Everybody worked willingly, nobody was slave labor. No school taught cathedral building as a subject.

What possessed people to work together for a hundred years? Whatever it was looks like something worth educating ourselves about. We know the workers were profoundly united as families of friends, and as friends they knew what they really wanted in the way of a church. Popes and archbishops had nothing to do with it; Gothic architecture itself was invented out of sheer aspiration, the Gothic cathedral stands like a lighthouse illuminating what is possible in the way of uncoerced human union. It provides a benchmark against which our own lives can be measured.

At Rheims, the serfs and farmers and peasants filled gigantic spaces with the most incredible stained glass

windows in the world but they never bothered to sign even one of them. Neither Harvard nor anybody else knows who designed them or made them because our modern form of institutional boasting did not yet exist as a corruption of communitarian feeling. After all these centuries they still announce what being human really means.

Communities are collections of families and friends who find major meaning in extending the family association to a band of honorary brothers and sisters, they are complex relationships of mutual job and obligation which generalize to others beyond the perimeter of the homestead.

When the integration of life that comes from being part of a family in a community is unattainable, the only alternative, apart from accepting a life in isolation, is to search for an artificial integration into one of the many expressions of network currently available. It's a bad trade and we should begin thinking about school reform by stopping these places from functioning like cysts, impenetrable, insular bodies that take our money, our children, and our time and give nothing back.

Artificial integration that controls human associations — think of those college dorms or fraternities — appears strong but is actually quite weak; seems close-knit but in reality its bonds are loose; suggests durability but is usually transient. And it is most often badly adjusted to what people need although it masquerades as being exactly what they need. Welcome to the world of school. Do we really want more of it? I don't ... [I]t appears to me as a schoolteacher that schools are already a major cause of weak families and weak communities. They separate parents and children from vital interaction with each other and from true curiosity about each other's lives. Schools stifle family originality by appropriating the critical time needed for any sound idea of family to develop—then they blame the family for its failure to be a family. It's like a malicious person lifting a photograph from the developing chemicals too early, then pronouncing the photographer incompetent...

Whatever an education is, it should make you a unique individual, not a conformist; it should furnish you with an original spirit with which to tackle the big challen-

ges; it should allow you to find values that will be your road map through life; it should make you spiritually rich, a person who loves wherever he is, whoever he is with, whatever he is doing; it should teach you what is important, how to live and how to die.

Many of us - perhaps even most - were not fortunate enough to grow up in a genuine community. I did live in one for a short but crucial while - a small New England town near Boston - between the ages of five and eleven. At the age of seventy-two I am seeing more and more clearly how powerful an influence those six precious years were for me in giving me a standard by which to measure all life, all relationship. No, of course not as an ideal! Community life has nothing to do with idealism! When you live - really live - with people for a long time, all their warts, their idiosyncrasies, their all-too human failings become very salient indeed.

Old New Englanders tended to solve this relationship problem by becoming eccentric - and so, we had our town "characters." There was old Mr. Woodhull, the piano tuner, whose long white beard and shaking fist accompanied by high-pitched rantings against his neighbors for allowing their cows to stray onto his property every spring were a perennial feature of Town Meeting. and as much a sign of spring as the appearance of crocuses, daffodils and cowslips. We children would sit up in the balcony of the town hall auditorium and whisper and giggle. There was old Miss Jenny Peirce, whose white, clapboarded house was always open to us Hallowe'en revelers for a steaming cup of hot chocolate on our rounds. There was old Mr. Marcy, who lived in a remote replica of an Irish castle, and whom one never saw but only heard about - and Mr. Ward, the town potter, whose hair was cut around one of his own bowls - or so we believed, since its style was "Dutch cut," "like a girl's," we would say.

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I went to school with families whose origins were from all over Europe - like my favorites, the Arzmarskis - and the passel of young Rasmussens, whom we, of course, called the "Ratskins." Many families were Portuguese. My big sister was in love with Manny Chavez (pronounced "Shaves"). We were called Cucumber, our family name being Macomber. I was "Merrimac," of course (the Merrimac River being a familiar feature of the landscape to us all). My twin brothers were both "Cukie."

No one was anonymous, but I never knew anyone who felt either racially discriminated against *or* believed himself to be a racist - perhaps because we all saw ourselves as "characters." Being one was a sign of distinction, of individuality, like a badge of recognition. And when you think about it, after all, most family names were originally acquired that way - as a kind of distinguishing badge. Wollstonecraft. Richelieu. Goldschmidt. Whitehead. Goodheart. Rothschild. Perhaps the "anonymity" of the French artisans and craftsmen-builders of the Gothic cathedrals of which John speaks was at least partly a consequence of the degree of individuality already achieved by dint of simply growing up in communities. No need to tout one's prowess beyond such a status.

Learning to live in community is not a simple matter, as we at the Free School community have realized again and again. For every person who initially finds in us a golden promise of life of deep meaning and worth - who *falls in love with* the image of community, in other words - there comes a point at which the illusory nature of his initial love affair becomes challenged so severely by the exigencies of community life that he is forced to make a choice - either to leave, or to stay and find a new, far deeper basis from within himself for membership than the one which brought him to us in the first place.

Learning to live in community is totally akin to learning to live in marriage - and you know how many present-day marriages - even some of several decades' standing - end in divorce! As Charlene, one of our members, has said so eloquently, "It's like having twenty lovers!" She didn't *necessarily* mean that as a compliment, by the way! She was commenting on the unexpected complexity of living so close to so many people, and the often painful inner process of individuation necessitated by this fact.

But I needn't run on about it. You can get a much better analysis of the nature of community from the *In Context* interview with Scott Peck. And rather than commenting here on the remaining contents of this issue, I have sprinkled my remarks throughout, attempting to provide continuity for the theme of school as community/community as school. Hope you enjoy it.

Also - please don't forget that the entire Carnegie Hall program is available as a reprint, either from John Gatto or from **ΣΚΟΛΕ**, the proceeds ($2) from its sale to go to John's work.

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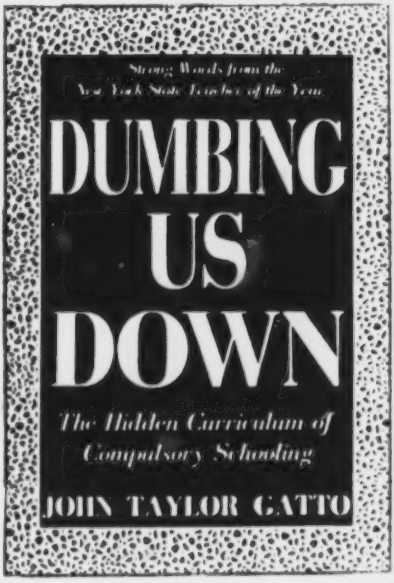

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From an article by Paul Grondahl in the Albany Times-Union, May 17, 1992:

Responding to the distress of her ten-year-old son, Mary Leue decided to start The Free School, which is now one of the longest running inner city independent alternative schools in the nation. Influenced by the father of anarchism Prince Pyotr Kropotkin, by Mahatma Gandhi, and by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., she firmly believes that open democratic education should be available to the children of the poor as well as those of the middle and upper classes.

"Mary is one of the most brilliant educators in the country who has kept alive the progressive tradition all through the Reagan and Bush years. She is one of the strongest voices for children in this country."
-Jonathan Kozol, author, advocate of alternative education

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SCHOOL AS COMMUNITY-
COMMUNITY AS SCHOOL

Here begins a cluster of pieces reflective in some way of school as community/community as school - both ideal and real. One is an interview with Scott Peck - taken from In Context *- on the nature and experience of community which will perhaps help you to understand better why there aren't more of them! And there are a lot more, from a wide variety of sources - some written from the starting point of school, others from community.*

You will notice that I have unabashedly included quite a bit of material from our own community/school. I do not feel impelled to apologize for this, because it is my belief that, among other things, we are or can become a model for how school as community as school works - or can work - in the lives of its members. No, not as an explicit model - every community has its own members, each uniquely themselves - its own organically-derived rules and mores - its own history and developmental processes - but as a way of life that fosters inner growth and enhances creative expression. And perhaps, after reading Peck's observations on the "perils of the path" - you will understand better why I believe this, after twenty-two years of living in our successful and growing community. Please do send me some of your own material! Truly, we need each other!

SCHOOL AS COMMUNITY:
KIDS, DEMOCRACY AND COMMUNITY
by Chris Mercogliano

The Free School is a community within a community, really, and we're at our best when there is a high level of interaction between the "inner" school and the "outer" world around the school. You will often find guests coming in to share their talents, loves and interests, and likewise you will find many Free School kids and grown-ups going out to do the same. Many of us, for example, participate in a number of community service projects such as staffing soup kitchens and food banks, and singing and visiting in nursing homes and senior citizens' centers. There are many learnings in these kinds of exchanges, the most central being the experience of relatedness and of the give and take that must flow freely if a collection of individuals are to achieve a level of cooperation sufficient to consider themselves a true community.

Since we're located in the state capital, it's not surprising for Free Schoolers to get involved with a political "issue" of one sort or another. This, then, often raises the age old controversy around children-activism-indoctrination, which is without a doubt a sensitive area. Interestingly, the whole thing just recently spilled over into the local papers - with us at the center of the storm.

The story goes like this: In February, '92, four Free Schoolers decided to fight to help save the New York State children's theater, which we attend often, and which stages its performances in a state-run facility on the edge of our neighborhood. With the Legislative Office Building only six blocks away, the kids began lobbying various state legislators in person. In order to direct much needed media atten-

tion to the problem, the kids asked me to call a local newspaper reporter and ask him to cover one of their sessions. He jumped at the chance and the following are excerpts from his article which ended up as a front-page, headline story in the Albany *Times Union* on a Monday morning:

Assemblyman Ronald Canestrari is running a little late this morning, but the lobbyists aren't quite through. It's a three on one encounter and the visitors are trying to avert a massive funding cut for the New York State Theater Institute by the State University of New York (SUNY).

"Did you know," says Rebeccah Johnson, "that SUNY is building a $13 million library?" Canestrari, who was gliding through the session until now, pauses. "No I didn't know that," he confesses.

Actually, the State University at Albany's high-tech computerized library is a $45 million long-range capital venture that does not directly affect the Theater Institute's $1.9 million program today. But the contrast is still apparent. So is the legislator's surprise. He says he will look into it, and then, shifting in his chair, says, "Well I know you're busy..."

Recognizing an overstayed welcome, the young women are on their feet. Johnson and Elisha Mittleman, 10, and Gabrielle Becker, 11, along with Lily Mercogliano, 8, who was sick that day, may well be the youngest lobbyists around the state Capitol these days, as they set about joining the battle in an effort to save the Institute.

Their targets say such an effort from any children on any topic is all but unique. "We've had all sizes and descriptions," says Canestrari, "but these are the youngest. Probably the brightest. Certainly the most sincere." Assemblyman Edward Sullivan, who is now working on a measure to give the Institute about $1.5 million, reducing the funding cut to 25%, says he also was impressed by the girls lobbying.

With the Institute caught up in the state's bigger budget

Lily, Rebeccah, Gabby and Elisha, demonstrating resolution for the Times-Union photographer in front of the New York State Legislative Office Building

picture, the girls say they realize that it may have to take some kind of cut, a refrain they have heard along the way. In the recent meeting with Canestrari, they listened and nodded as he explained that money is tight, but also raised the issue of SUNY's proposed computer tape library as an example of what they feel is excessive capital spending at a time when an ongoing program is threatened.

So far, the girls have met with Capital District legislators and made it as far as an aide to Sen. Ralph Marino, the Senate's majority leader. They are still lining up other appointments, including one with Assembly speaker Saul Weprin.

Trying to gauge the result of their work so far, the girls appear practical. While they're encouraged by Sullivan's attempt to get more money through, they also sense that there have been some false promises along the way. One legislator's aide, they recall, promised that her boss - whom the girls preferred to keep anonymous - would certainly vote on a bill when one comes up. But the girls note that wasn't really much of a commitment. "He's not doing anything," Lily said, "He doesn't care. He'll only do something if a bill comes up."

They've also found, they say, that it's one thing to get in a door at the Capitol, but quite another to have someone listen. The same aide, the girls recall, spent the session staring right at them and trying to look as if she was paying attention. "But, like, she'd go out on another planet," Becker says. "She wasn't listening."

The ink was barely dry on this story when the kids' and my efforts were blasted by a very well-known columnist for the same newspaper. The column's title, *Crusaders Exploit Children*, kind of says it all; but for the sake of a good story, I'll include a few highlights here:

...Then why in this precious time of life - when adult cares and tensions are farthest from their thoughts - should youngsters be used as props and fronts for crusading groups, ambitious parents, and anyone else who sees tugging at young heartstrings as a way of achieving their goal?

At the Capitol recently were four girls lobbying to restore planned funding cuts of the New York State Theater Institute by the State University of New York. Wait a minute, lobbying? The youngsters were 8, 9, 10, and 11 years old. Sure they are sweet, sincere kids - as are all kids in their age of innocence - but what do they know about lobbying?...

The girls were obviously put there to attract attention and echo the views of those who have a cause. I'm afraid it's a shameless way to get a message across.

Let the grown-ups make the decisions based on wisdom, education, experience and the hard knocks encountered on the bumpy road of life. The younger generation will have its chance to influence policy and shape history in due time. As for now, let kids live in their own world and enjoying being kids.

The four lobbyists felt deeply insulted by the columnist and immediately decided to write him a letter. I felt that a response to the newspaper's readership was called for, so I wrote a detailed, several page long discussion of the issues the column had raised. The editor of the paper graciously agreed to print the majority of my piece on the Op-Ed page, with the headline *When Kids Aren't Pawns*. Here are some excerpts from it:

...Reading between the lines of his column, which is replete with romantic euphemisms about childhood, I can hear his genuine wish that children neither be forced to grow up prematurely nor exploited as media puppets by manipulative adults, thereby having their right to a full and free childhood seriously infringed upon...

Because I share Ralph Martin's concern about the manipulation of children, I told the kids I thought it best that they do the lobbying by themselves. Anxious to do their own talking, they heartily agreed; so with me serving as their appointment secretary, the project was launched....

There should be no doubt that the motivation of these four children came from no other source than their own deeply held concerns about their own lives. They have all been to numerous Theater Institute productions, and have learned dramatics and creative writing from the Institute's visiting teacher/artists and interns. One student has attended their theater arts school and another has served an apprenticeship with a scenery artist. In no way did I coax them into their actions, nor did I put words into their mouths, directly or indirectly. In fact, at several points along the way, I asked them to look at both sides of the issue that they were raising with our elected leaders.

...The question remains whether it is appropriate for individuals in middle childhood to be spending time learning about and then perhaps addressing social problems. My own answer would begin with a consideration of the particular issue, children and historical context.

I recall an educational video made at the height of the Cold War called, "In The Nuclear Shadow," in which a cross-section of American young people are asked about their thoughts and feelings concerning the threat of nuclear war. What follows is a sobering litany of paralyzing fear and despair. Youth after youth talks about feeling powerless to do anything about the problem, about not expecting to live a full life and about wanting to grab what little they can before it is too late. The seeds of apathy, cynicism and a general "me first" attitude are all too apparent.

At least for now, a sense of impending environmental catastrophe has replaced the threat of nuclear holocaust in the minds of the current generation of kids. Keeping in mind that children are indeed vulnerable to manipulation (as are a great many adults), I can certainly envision circumstances when it is highly appropriate for children to publicly display their support for improved air quality or any of a number of other environmental issues which intimately affect their future on the earth. The key, in my book, is that they not be indoctrinated by adults, no matter how well meaning, and that their actions be freely chosen.

Birmingham, Ala. in the late 1950's comes to mind, when hundreds of children chose to leave school one afternoon to stand on the picket lines in place of their parents,

who either were already in, or could not afford to go back to, jail. The courageous action by those children broke the back of police chief Bull Conner's system of enforced segregation and won a pivotal victory for civil rights in the South.

My firm belief as a teacher of children is that democracy is an art that is learned, not taught. Kids learn to be good citizens by practicing citizenship, by actively involving themselves in the democratic process when **their** spirit moves them to do so. Our young people are growing up in a world that is increasingly isolated and cut off from the adult world, and there appears to be no magical transformation that occurs when they reach legal voting age. Just look at national voter turn-out rates (and the quality of the candidates, for that matter) for evidence of this alarming trend.

Finally, let us not forget the wisdom of the old folk tale, "The Emperor's New Clothes." Remember that it is a child in the village who finally sees through the charade of the emperor and his court and has the youthful courage to cry out, "Why he's wearing nothing at all!" "

There are a couple of ideas that I didn't write for the newspaper which certainly belong in this article. One is that unless children have the opportunity to practice democracy on a real and daily basis in school, there is a much greater likelihood that they will become passive and sheep-like citizens when they reach adulthood. For that reason, as well as others, students and teachers at the Free School run the school democratically, utilizing a "council meeting" system (one part Roberts Rules of Order, one part Native American council circle) to set policy, make and change rules, and mediate disputes of all kinds. Kids generally run these meetings and they are the heart and soul of what we do together.

Here, the companion idea of community needs to be added to that of democracy to make this whole notion more complete. Neither, I believe, can exist without the other in any meaningful form, and both receive as much attention as is needed on any given

day in our school. Like democracy, community - if it is to be more than just a buzz-word paid lip service to - requires daily practices like keeping interpersonal relationships free of stored up resentments and depends on everyone being 100% responsible for the larger body. Obviously, these are ideal statements, and community - like democracy - is at its best an imperfect art. At the Free School our goal is to keep the experiment as alive as we can and learn from our mistakes. Hence the school motto that I coined years ago, "Never a dull moment, always a dull roar!"

Postscript: A week or so after Chris' answer to Ralph Martin came out in the Times Union, he received the following letter from the father of one of our former students who is now in public school:

Dear Chris,

I just read your article in the newspaper today discussing the issues that Ralph Martin raised concerning the "use" of children in lobbying, protesting etc. I would like you to know that I am in full agreement with your assertions and would like to thank you for your efforts.

Reading your thoughts in the paper brought me back to the days that my daughter Britt had the great fortune of attending the Free School. Your article is a reflection of the great attention and care, commitment and understanding that is so needed by the children of today's world.

Britt's transition to the public school system has been a great success. She has been maintaining superior grades every year. More importantly though, she has been self-motivated, secure and working to her potential. Her teachers report that she is a wonderful student who participates positively in class.

There are times in everyone's life when perhaps we have doubts and insecurities as to what we are doing. Is it worth it? Am I doing it the right way? What does this really mean in the end? I would like to take this opportunity to let the people at the Free School know that your work is invaluable, appreciated and the effects

generated by your endeavors are as a pebble cast into still water. The ripples go on in ways you will never know. Thank you so much and continue the great work.

Sincerely,
Laurin
Trainer

Chris Mercogliano is a teacher and co-director of the Free School as well as a skilled plumber, mason, carpenter, electrician, father, Reichian therapist - and a frequent contributor to *ΣΚΟΛΕ*.

SHARED SPACES
by Betsy Mercogliano

The other day, I went to visit a dragon. This is a very special dragon that lives not too far from the Free School, curled up in the recesses of the other-worldly concrete architecture of the State Museum, often sleeping at the top of the curved, five story staircase that moves from the huge patio that surrounds the building into the darkened eves. I took six four and five year olds and we were on a quest - an adventure, we call it. You see, this dragon blesses this area with his smoke and sometimes his fire, being a dragon that cares with a passion about people's lives and people's hearts, wanting to breathe some of his passion into their dreams and their concerns. And he appreciates respect, quiet, and visits from one person at a time. So, whenever we go to visit the dragon, whose smoke we have seen, whose friends we see on top of the Capitol Building and some of the churches and older buildings in Albany, we whisper, once we get to the top of the seventy-stepped staircase that leads to the patio.

We walk together calmly, listening for signs of the dragon's wakefulness - a low humming - and looking for the steam that often drifts out from under the eves of the building, a sure sign that the dragon is home and resting near the entrance to his cave. Then we stop and collect ourselves before we each decide if we want to take a message to the dragon that day.

Back at school, we had had a long discussion about each persons' worries, problems or concerns that they had on their minds that day. This grew out of two kids coming to school that day in a real funk about a situation at home. I always like to help anyone share these issues with other kids as it inevitably

blossoms into an animated discussion about the times someone else has felt something similar, had to live through a similar situation or had to solve a similar problem. Kids are pretty open-hearted with each other during these sharings and come up with some great ideas - everything from, "Well, I go outside and shout really loud," to throwing pillows to sitting in someone's lap at school, to going to the feeling room (a mattress-lined room in the school).

Mostly, the listening and empathy that happens often lightens the burden for the child. There is something about these sharings that moves me a great deal - the quality of really caring, the total listening, the knowing that these things are the important juice of life, the really touching each other, in their own terms, that happens. There is a clarity and depth that I see as an adult that is beautiful - just the truth and the willingness to listen and to share the life space with another person - walk in another's moccasins. Sure, it is not always all there and this group connectedness is something that I "work on" all year and sometimes it jells and sometimes it doesn't. And sometimes I am aware of asking who is the teacher here! They are teaching me about the naturalness of wanting relatedness and sometimes I am teaching them how to renew these bonds. At its best, it flows.

After a few moments of quiet, someone suggests that we visit the dragon. I ask each child what they would like to say to the dragon today. These are whispered concerns, often almost secrets that they are entrusting to me to help them write on a small piece of paper. Things like, "Help my grandma get better (from her broken hip), help me to not wet the bed at night, help my dad get a happier job, help me and my sister get along better, I hope you (the dragon) have a long life and help me with my scary dreams, help me not fight with my

A tangle of kids - or puppies?

brother so much." I write each thought out for them to copy in their own handwriting and then we are off.

Each child has the opportunity to leave their note somewhere on the staircase that goes to the dragon's den. Sometimes it is at the foot of the staircase, sometimes it is halfway up. What happens is that the whole group of us sits a short way away while one person at a time goes up, often talking to the dragon as they go. I make sure each child understands that the rest of us are with them in spirit and thought, because by now they each hold this visit as awe-some and a special, challenging time for them to share some of their deep thoughts, concerns or wishes with something bigger than themselves.

This is somewhat hard for me to put into words, but I just know that a bit of mythological, magical space is needed sometimes in anyone's life to open some doors in our hearts or minds. All I can say is that each time I go with a group of children to see the dragon, and I only go maybe two times a year, I see a new part of each child emerge. It may be courage and clarity of speech from a withdrawn or timid child, it may be true concern about others from a child who tends to be a loner; it may be, often is, deep insight into a personal or family problem - it is **always** amazing. And don't be misled, I take *my* note up to the stairs, too.

Something in this process with the younger children has helped me be a better teacher with most ages of children. Two years ago, I had the opportunity to teach the eleven, twelve and thirteen year olds here at the Free School. I again felt the need to find some common ground, some shared spaces for us to be in right from the beginning. I often try to get back what being a certain age felt

like for me, and this particular age had lots of physical challenges for me. So much was changing!

Many mornings, I would just sit and talk with this group about whatever was going on for them and we would invariably launch into a discussion about what they liked or didn't like about being twelve, what they missed about being eight, how it was different, etc. I did a lot of active listening as well as sharing my memories of those years, to the chortles and guffaws and "you really did that?!" of the group. Then we would often get into a discussion about bodies. Bodies, how they work, why they work, what different parts are for, the feelings within - this is common to all of us and I find myself continually fascinated and brought back to these discussions with just about any age group. I mean, we've all got one, right?

I have learned over the years, especially from Mary Leue (the founder of The Free School) that being willing to talk about **just about anything** in a sensitive, respectful and open way is a core of any relationship with kids. If they sense that I am willing to share the knowledge and experience of just having been there (their age) before, as well as having been around longer to have learned a few new ways of being with life's twists and turns, without competing or moralizing, and with honest respect for their uniqueness and the reality that they are my teachers, too, we tend to have some pretty lively discussions.

We usually would go from discussion to some kind of exploration - getting the microscope out to find out just what blood cells, cheek cells, hair, banana, onion look like, taking turns being blind and being guided around the neighborhood by another person in the class, standing on a four foot high platform and falling into the arms of the other kids - backwards and with our eyes closed- watching an in-

terview with Magic Johnson and 15 kids, 4 of whom were HIV positive and talking about the feelings that arose as well as what each person really knew about AIDS.

I guess the core of all this is that I love to explore inner and outer spaces with kids and I let them know that I am willing to let them lead me sometimes into their curiosities, dark spaces, magic spaces - and they learn to trust me to take them places, too. Maybe it is all about trust - that is certainly where we all begin on this planet - maybe it is the only true beginning to any relationship.

I am writing this article because I want to share some of what I do to create a shared space with kids. It is in this place that we explore the edges of our worlds, both inner and outer, I have discovered. I never knew this was where I would be headed with teaching. I don't think I even knew that this is really the juice of teaching - to lead out from each other the questions, the insights, the profound queries that make this living continually fascinating, frustrating, challenging and invigorating. And I never understood how much teaching is about being in a relationship - with deep inner self concerns and with others - pulsing back and forth, open and closed, inner and outer, teacher and learner. I didn't realize that I would be trying on four year old moccasins, twelve year old moccasins as well as my worn ones from years ago - and discovering that I could walk a ways in them and get a fresh look at life each time.

Betsy Mercogliano is or has been at various times co-director, treasurer, cook and teacher in the Free School Betsy is also a direct-entry midwife and labor coach at our birth center, Matrix.

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Three of the girls Chris mentions in his article are the authors of the following group of Free School children's poems, several of which received prizes in a recent city-wide poetry contest. Lily is one of the Mercoglianos' two daughters. We can't wait until their younger daughter Sarah begins to manifest her talents out in the world, whatever they may be!

TRUTH
by Alyssa Zienkowicz

Blue skies vanish
In dark blackening skies
Thunder bolts out
I feel alone in darkness
Cries of help are heard
from a distance
But I am free at last

A POEM
by Monique Roberts

in the day
I see bluebirds flying
in the sky
I walk down to the pond
and I see the pond flowing
with beautiful water
I see farther away
a garden
full of flowers
I pick a tulip and a violet
for my mother
I go home
I look in the mirror
and I see myself
as a blossoming flower

I WISH
by Elisha Mittleman

I wish my grandmother would sit
by the fire
and rock
and tell me stories
I wish I was young again
sometimes
That's what
I wish

I'm a big girl now
and I'm proud
Sometimes I wish I was older
than I am
but that will come
someday
and I will like it

A POEM
by Eve Minehan

the branch of a glistening tree
with powerful fluorescent green leaves
flowing with the strength
of a lightning bolt
with roots the size of giant's finger
ready to burst

MY DREAM
by Lily Mercogliano

I knew I was flying high
but when I told all my family
all they said was,
" Go to bed."
but I knew that all they meant was
"Don't be silly.
You cannot fly."
but I knew that I was flying
just that night.

A POEM
by Gabrielle Becker

when the rainbow shines
the sun comes up
and then I go outside
with my silver spoon
and I sit on the log
and the nothing sits on the chair
then I get out my keys
unlock the lock
and go down in the tunnel
there is no window
there is no sun
there is just nothing
nothing at all
I come out of the tunnel
the sunset is so red
I raise my spoon in the air
I go over the bridge
I stop to look at the stream
It flows so beautiful

CREATIVITY
by Charlene Liberata

It was poetry that finally got me teaching full time at the Free School. Over the five or six years that my children had been at the school I had been a parent volunteer and even a substitute teacher at times but I had never recognized the possibility of my being a "real" teacher. Indeed, the idea of myself as a teacher at all was one that grew gradually over the years. I was as stuck in the very narrow societal definition of "teacher" as anyone else, until one day, I brought in some of my poetry books and sat down with some kids and began to read to them and to encourage them to write their own poetry. And they did. And they asked me when I could come again. I was so thrilled that I arranged to be in school one day a week to read and write poetry with whomever wanted to do it.

I had been writing poetry since 9th grade and was aware of how powerful a tool it had been in my life. My love had been sparked when I wrote my first poem and received encouragement from a teacher whose own inner fire had caught mine. She read my poem to the class and it changed my life. I don't even remember her name because she was only there a short time, but I will never forget her. So here I was on the other end of that dynamic and I so much enjoyed watching the fire jump from one to another that I asked to be a full time teacher at the Free School. Perhaps I wanted to find out what other things might be joyful for me. But it was definitely my heart that led me to this decision. I began in January of 1986, a new year.

Right from the start, to my utter amazement, I was treated as a full fledged member of the working

body of the Free School. People valued my opinion and supported me when appropriate. This scared me a little and delighted me also. It sure felt right even though I couldn't recall ever having experienced this before. I felt respected and also responsible. In this atmosphere my own creativity blossomed.

I think it is the element of respect/responsibility that enables people to tap into their own juice. I tell children who are first starting out, "There is a place inside of you where the poetry comes from and it's all yours." It belongs to them. It isn't mine and I'm really clear about that. It's sort of like being a midwife. I love life in this form so much that I guide from experience and intuition but always with awe. Although I encourage them to share, they may choose not to. I will help them to get some starter words by using a simple breathing pattern if they like, suggesting to them that the word or picture or idea will just come into their mind as they exhale. Or they can just sit down and start cranking it out. I will always do the writing if they want to dictate. In fact, no matter what their level of writing skill, some kids really appreciate this. I think it helps them to stay with the tenderness or passion or clarity of their material if they don't have to think so much in the way that one needs to in order to carry out the operation of writing.

The experience of contacting their inner knowing in this way is so valuable that I consider it one of the most important things I do in my life. The intangible in them is brought into a form of their own making which is often a revelation to them and a pleasure to others. I love it when a child who has difficulty mastering reading or writing discovers that they are a particularly gifted poet. This happens

Alyssa, one of our young poets, being coiffed by Debbie - she appears to be enjoying the attention!

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often. Beauty just flows when unimpeded by judgments about competence. In fact, I suspect that expressing the "wonder-full" is, for them, just a higher priority than learning the techniques of language arts and that in being "unable" to learn to read or write the voice of their own integrity is speaking loud and clear in favor of a more important agenda. So many times it is through their heartfelt desire to read their own poetry that they begin to overcome their so-called lack of success in reading. It is the fact that poetry is itself a language art that makes it so valuable in this way. For some kids it is success with words where no success has been had before. In our traditional school system, self-negating beliefs are the inevitable result of homogenization, labeling and the gross lack of respect for individuality. These beliefs can be powerfully challenged and dispelled in a way that is hard to beat. I'm thinking here of a former student of mine who had come to us from a painfully unsuccessful school experience. He was still struggling with reading and writing at the age of ten. He had been labeled and managed and he was very angry. But when we composed Haiku he dictated, in two minutes, the top winning entry in that year's city-wide contest. I'm thinking of that boy's smile and the look in his eyes. This process of bringing forth their own beauty prepares them for so many other opportunities. Through it they begin to feel in charge of themselves, and they begin to contact their own power in a very self-supportive way.

As a young woman I found out for the first time in my life that there was something of value that was mine alone to bring into the world. It became a springboard for relationship, a safety valve for taboo feelings, a creative vent, a source of genuine self-esteem and tremendous joy. Only when I was ready did I chose to go public and only in doses that I could handle without giving myself away. It was and

still is a delicate issue for me because of my early conditioning. I want to feel acknowledged from the outside in as well as from the inside out. This is really the key. I have received praise in my life but only when it makes sense to me is it of any value. This is a very important issue. I never call someone a wonderful poet. I am careful to say how their poetry makes me feel. The truth is that their poetry does make me feel and this I love! They beam and can't wait to show me the next one.

Those who choose to can also become published, do readings and/or enter contests. Many Free Schoolers have won awards. This year seven out of eleven children who chose to enter a city -wide poetry contest won prizes and awards, including a five year old who won a $50 savings bond. As all of us in the Free School grow, we are offered more and more chances to come face to face with ourselves, and many situations serve as mirrors. Some are unavoidable, such as feedback from others in relationship. But some are totally optional. And some are just too good to pass up, like preparing to travel to a conference, although the pitfalls are never obvious from the start. Having a strong pathway to our place of inner wisdom is a prerequisite for developing many of the skills that we need to have if we are to become the creative, care-full, aware adults who will, in turn, respect the wisdom of Mother Earth. The people in our school operate out of radiating levels of community in which we are encouraged and empowered by each other to become who we are; original creations capable of revealing the divine.

Charlene Liberata has made an indispensable place for herself both in the school and the community, as a teacher - of poetry-making and other delights - and as a parent and community member. Here follows a poem of her own.

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His

when your sisters prepared to leave
I watched with excitement and sadness
then they went away
but you, my son
you have left so young
and you are still here
there is the lack of daughters to remind me
of the absence
while you you walk near me every day
and I forget
I try to talk to you
and my words cannot find their way
you are no longer mine
but it is a blessing
you are his

PERUVIAN CHILDREN
by Connie Frisbie-Houde

Two years ago I spent two months in Peru working with an archaeological team locating and cataloging textiles. Most of my time was spent on the south coast, in the Acari River Valley south of Nazca. Carol, one of the women in the crew, had traveled in South America a number of times. In the evenings, we would often share stories of who we were as we waited for the evening meal. One evening we had a conversation about children. I spoke of my experiences at the Free School, as a foster mother and as a part of the Free School community. She was intrigued by some of my outlooks and observations about children. From her travels in the highlands, she described the indigenous peoples' children as passive. She wanted to know what I thought about them and how I would see them.

Toward the end of my stay in Peru I traveled into the highlands with another women from the archaeological group. This article is a expanded version of the letter I wrote to Carol after my return to the United States. It describes my observations and gut feelings about the children and their relationships to their parents and care givers.

The best opportunity to observe the Peruvian children and their families occurred on the long scenic train ride from Juliaca to Cuzco - a trip that started at 7 a.m. and ended at 7 p.m., stopping in many small highland towns. We were traveling first class, which is the way tourists travel. A different class ticket is usually not sold to tourists. This is supposedly for the tourists' safety and comfort. When the train is full and crowded, which I imagine

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it is most of the time, the Peruvians stand and sit in the aisles close to the doors of the first class cars. If a conductor goes through the train, they can easily move out onto the small platform between the cars or jam themselves into a second class car. At many of the stops the native peoples go through the cars selling their wares including cheese, fruit, soda and other food items and some of their beautifully crafted sweaters and blankets. What they sell depends upon what the particular craft is for that area.

Our car was arranged with tables and bench seats accommodating four adults per table. Across the aisle from us, filling two tables, was a family consisting of a mother with a one or one-and-a-half year old boy, three children six years and older and another woman friend. I would describe them as a Europeanized Peruvian family because of their dress and mannerisms. Throughout the day long trip I experienced them as being very focused on the youngest child. When it was time for his nap, everyone else was required to shift position. All but the mother who was watching him squeezed in around one of the tables. The mother pulled down the window shade and told the older children to be quiet, as if it really made a difference despite the other noise on the train. When this child was awake, he was constantly being entertained and passed from person to person. The whole family group was very focused on him at the expense of the other children and the adults. He was allowed very little time to sit and entertain himself with a small toy, or to feed himself with minimal assistance. He was constantly being waited on and taken care of. How could this child develop a sense of himself and his own abilities?

Looking back at this scene, I feel that the child was getting an inflated sense of self from this kind of care-taking. Why should he bother to learn to take care of himself if everyone was doing it for him? If

Jamie doing his thing!

no different learning pattern develops for him, I see the probability of his becoming a very entitled child.

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no different learning pattern develops for him. I see the probability of his becoming a very entitled child. He may not understand the need to work for something and may not learn how to discover his own abilities. A child learns at a very early age what it is to be in the world around him.

Later on the same train trip I noticed one of the native highland women carrying a child about the same age as the first child in a carrying cloth of the kind which Peruvian women tie around their shoulders, in which the child can be held either in the front or the back. Carol had described these highland children as passive. I experienced this "passivity" more as a physical quietness. I do not even like to apply the term passive to this child, for I saw an aliveness and alertness in her. Her gaze extended beyond those people who were familiar to her and beyond her immediate surroundings. The relationship between the mother and child was very different from that of the first mother and child I described. Never did I see the native mother neglect or be harsh to her child, nor did I see her being totally focused on her. It seemed more like a dance. The mother took her cues from the child. She seemed to intuitively know what the child needed. There was a very warm and special relationship that I saw between this child and her mother. It felt to me as though the child had a choice to be attended to or not.

I was also struck by the first little boy across the way from us wanting to see who I was. It seemed as though he wanted to extend his own boundaries. It felt to me as though his mother, perhaps on an unconscious level, had let down her control and he was beginning to explore. When his mother became aware of this she became more controlling and kept him from looking my direction by diverting his attention. I did not feel her check me

out to see if it would be safe for her son to make contact with me. There may have been some natural concern that I was a foreigner, a stranger. Eventually when she was not paying full attention, I began to play peek-a-boo with him. He was delighted. His mother seeing this did not interfere. I experienced him as more animated than he had been all day. I believe it was his delight in being able to discover something for himself, not simply the fun of the game.

I felt that there was something very open and precious in the highland woman's relationship with her daughter in contrast to the much more controlled and forced relationships in the other family. I later saw highland children engaged in play and work with enthusiasm and independence. I believe the openness and freedom with which I perceived the highland child was being raised would allow her to have this independence and enthusiasm for life.

Connie Frisbie-Houde, a great fan of children, as you can tell from the above account, has been a member of the Free School community since the seventies, and has played many roles in the community and the school, including that of friend/advocate of the children, volunteer foster parent - along with her husband, retired Air Force colonel Frank - popular substitute teacher, secretary-treasurer of CBC, our little housing rehab enterprise, manager of our new store Simple Gifts, and perennial hostess for Friday night presenters at our weekend workshop series at Rainbow Camp!

Additionally, Connie has made a name for herself as curator of Historic Cherry Hill for many years, a museum created at the home of the van Rensselaer family; chronicler and restorer of historical costumes whose exhibit of restored clothing from several centuries of the van Rensselaer family won prizes several years ago at the Albany Museum of History and Art and elsewhere; secretary of the New York Costume Society; and, most recently, as a member of a team excavating ancient

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textiles in various indigenous sites in Peru, as she mentions in this article.

Connie is also in great demand as a cataloguer of historical clothing at various museums in neighboring counties, and occasionally offers courses at nearby colleges or at our state museum in Albany. She also designs wonderful clothing under the label "The Lily," and takes breath-taking photographs of everything she responds to, which is a lot! Connie is currently busy brushing up on her Spanish in preparation for her next trip to Peru.

Note: This piece was written in 1982. I came across it by chance the other day and wondered if it had anything of value to say. It feels to me totally appropriate to the issue of community, speaking as it does to the ecstatic dimension of life in relationship. But that's my outlook. I'd love it if you felt like telling me how it affects you.

TRICKSTERS ANONYMOUS
by Mary Leue

I just came across an absolutely brilliant idea. Our trouble, if it be called that, is that in our own minds we have no peers! - and so, feel unrecognized, essentially. And that's fortunate - and also unfortunate. I mean, of course, that we feel unrecognized for what we *wish* we were, but are actually recognized, all too often, as what we insist on NOT being - tricksters! And of course, that term includes all sorts of corollaries, such as snake oil salesmen *malgré nous!* Shamans! Crazies! Mystics! Fools! Prophets! Poets! Alcoholics! The list is very long. Some we love - others we resent intensely. We are, of course, in love with our own brilliance. And the corollary to *that* statement is that, of course, we have the great misfortune to see through anyone else's, so, naturally, we can't trust anyone - which makes us feel pretty lonely. So, the question is, is that OK with us? Yeah - and not really. It creates an unrelentingly selfless/self-obsessed way of doing, thinking, feeling, being. Which we see, both in ourselves *and* each other, of course, being so brilliant.

There was an article in *Psychology Today* a few years ago that I found valuable on one aspect of this subject - children who play "schlemiel" roles, comedians in general - "contraries," to use the Native

American term. Coyotes. People whose childhoods were so topsy-turvy that it was necessary for them to create a counter-world of their own, by contrast with which the world of other people struck them as totally absurd - risible, even. For such children, tragedy and comedy became so close-knit as to be the two sides of one entity, an entity which could flip to the reverse side at any moment. And the entire inner construct came about because these kids loved their parents - and their lives - a great deal! Not caring would have created a totally different life script.

We're a big group. To the previous list of roles I would add a gaggle of gurus, therapists, spiritual community leaders, actors (some of them), story tellers, mimics, priests, rabbis, ministers (the good ones), - and even an occasional doctor or psychiatrist - although this latter genre is becoming extinct, the doctoring trade having become primarily a matter of business! Oh, sure, most of "us" can find refuge in groups of superficially like-minded people for a time such as the NCACS, Sufism or the Associations of Transpersonal or Humanistic Psychology. We can become writers or poets (like Ann Sexton, Sylvia Plath, Virginia Woolff or Robinson Jeffers) and some of us can become addicts or mystics, or whatever. It's all sleight of hand - mental juggling - whether or not we do it for The Lady (like the *jongleur de Notre Dame*). Do you get what I mean? It has to do with empty inner space that we can fill and fill and empty and empty - and whew! we sometimes become Rich Littles, i'faith, with so many people living inside us!

Socrates, quoting the Delphic Oracle, told us to "Γνοθι σαυτον!" - know thyself. The best way I know to penetrate to the center of that mysterious labyrinth of the self is once more to become a child, to see the world anew through the images of childhood. The bottom line, of course, is that we are all

lovers! Love is the only way to go for us, as that article in *Psychology Today* points out. We are LOVE ADDICTS, alas! And that is why we must go back to the beginning again, and begin looking within - but this time, with support from other grown-up children. And of course, even then there's no guarantee we won't simply co-create an organizationally endorsed illusion system, is there! So could we make up an "inner," invisible organization, just for *us*?

I've even got a theme song we could use in our new organization. Tune in to "The Spider's Web" [a very fine children's program at the time] on NPR and listen to the theme song. I love it because it's always just the same, the same inexplicable oldish small odd man singing, always the inaudibility of a couple of key words, always the feeling of George MacDonald's [*The Princess and the Goblins*, a magnificent children's classic] grandmother's vast moonlit chamber at the top of the stairs with NO FLOOR and the spinning wheel humming out of sight somewhere in the vasty universe. Oh, God, dear friends, do we not need one another? Truth is such a precious commodity, and so rare!

A.A. Milne catches the phrasing to a T, in a poem on acknowledging the taboo, "Step on a crack; break your mother's back!" that stops us all:

> And I say to them,
> "Bears!
> Just look how I'm walking
> on all of the squares!"

Some of us still live by children's ways - which become the ways of writers who feel especially comfort-able living in those pathways of inner understanding.

We - tricksters all - come in all sizes and styles. Actually, we're so darned tricky that we (mainly) fool OURSELVES. That's why we need each

other, you know? We do, to keep each other straight - because:

> The night is dark
> and we are far from home...

and because:

> The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
> But we have promises to keep,
> And miles to go before we sleep -
> And miles to go before we sleep.

We live between the worlds of the "inside" and the "outside," the world of other people. Hermes, the trickster god of thresholds, passages, is our special messenger, our talisman.We understand liminal - threshold - pain, the pain that comes from experiencing the gap between those two worlds, the pain of loving so much in an absurd world; we understand death. Dylan Thomas couldn't STAND that pain, nor could the two women poets I mentioned. They cashed it in early on because they had allowed themselves to become caught in their own mind-webs of projection, webs which THEY thought had been woven by their mothers, alas! Harry Stack Sullivan is one of the few psychiatrists who has put himself on record as having actually encountered at firsthand the mother-as-spider, through his nightmares. I'm not sure he ever got out of that web, however, if Rollo May is right, in speaking of "wounded healers" like Sullivan and Frieda Fromm-Reichmann.

And so we juggle. The game is fast and you need all your balance and grace to juggle with so many dumbbells - and some of us are klutzes. So can we not be with one another? Could we call us "Tricksters Anonymous?" Give us a name. We could become a corresponding group - no names given, of

course. But everyone would send their letters to me! And since I began it, nobody *but me* would know who else was a member - right? That way, I would get you all to myself and get all the credit for my cleverness, right? Wouldn't work, huh. Anyone worthy of the name wouldn't bite, right? Ho hum.

O.K. So you tell me how YOU think it should go . Oh, heck, I can already see that the trickiest ones of you, us, wouldn't play; the risk would be too great, getting trapped with ordinary peons, dupes, the proletariat. And yet - and yet - if everybody did join, what a game that would be. Huh? Couldn't we live? SHINE? SHIMMER? No, too risky. We can only do it in the inside world, where we feel safe by ourselves. Anything else is just a mirage - right?

We are all profound cowards. Hey - whatever - right? It's OK. Really. We do love each other - among other things! But, ah, how wonderful it would be if only ... we could still be Fools together. Couldn't WE dare to love US, even if we never dared to come forward and live together on the outside world? In my mind I keep hearing Alan Watts' cosmic laugh! - remembering the emptiness at the end of the Buddhist path, so like the dark at the top of the stairs where stands the door to the moonlit, midnight blue, floorless, roofless room of the web-spinning cosmic Grandmother, the Grandmother of us all.

Kabir says it so well (in Robert Bly's translation):

Friend, hope for the Guest while you are alive.
Jump into experience while you are alive!
Think... and think... while you are alive.
What you call "salvation" belongs to the time before death.

If you don't break your ropes while you're alive,
do you think
ghosts will do it after?

The idea that the soul will join with the ecstatic

just because the body is rotten -
that is all fantasy.
What is found now is found then.
If you find nothing now,
You will simply end up with an apartment in the City
of Death.
If you make love with the divine now, in the next life
you will have the face of satisfied desire.

So plunge into the truth,
find out who the Teacher is,
Believe in the Great Sound!

Kabir says this:
When the Guest is being searched for,
it is the intensity of the longing for the Guest that
does all the work.
Look at me, and you will see a slave of that intensity.

Love,
Mary

WHO'S THE TEACHER?
by Sandy Hurst

There is a place in the Santa Theresa Mountains in Southeastern Arizona where a piece of me remains. It's at the top of a knob where a lone juniper grows, sheltered by two big boulders. It commands a view of a creek in a valley where an eagle presides over cattle, jack rabbits, mule deer, coati-mundi, and, so the cowboys say, a bobcat or two.

In this place there are several special rocks that, for one night, represented the people I most love; and a long stem of sotol, broken in three pieces, representing the place to which I have given my life.

Nurtured by a mother who always looked toward the hills and a father who always wanted to go where he'd never been, it should not be surprising that, at the age of fifty-three, I would select this spot for my rite of passage. Surrounded by people fifteen to eighteen; led by some who were just beginning to truly know that passage, I gave over my life for a brief time, trusting that they would help me to find my own way into my next step in life.

We never know, in this business of alternative-holistic-free-whatever-schools, where or when we'll really know the outcomes - the answers to why we "keep on keepin' on".

This is the story of one answer to that question.

A long time ago a boy came to our school who was one of those sweet, "way out", confused young men whose family, though they loved him, had thrown up their hands in despair of his ever achieving any education or sense of responsibility. He did

too much of the drugs he chose and played his music all day long.

In time he let go of a lot of the drugs and began to share his music. We worked together - he played and sang it patiently as I wrote it down and tried to teach him how to do that himself. He developed close relationships with several people at the school, including a teacher who introduced him to Yoga and helped to bring out the writer in him, and a science teacher who shared many hours with him in the field and in discussion - both philosophical and scientific.

He graduated and went on to explore the many facets of intelligence and skill that were beginning to manifest themselves. He struggled with the compromises of life and the choices to be made, and, ultimately, he settled on a search for a means of helping other young people to find their way in this hurried and harassed world that has no time for them.

We saw each other from time to time; he played his newest music for me and really wanted to hear my impression of it. And he talked with me about his project - why not re-create the rite of passage through which Native American young people found their way to adulthood. We have little in our culture that marks this passage, and maybe we need it.

He researched the few programs already existing and began to create his own version, taking into account the realities of teen-age life in America today. What resulted was his graduation thesis for Hampshire College and the articulation of something I believed would be perfect for schools like ours, as well as for other youth programs. He tested it and honed it with several groups and then, one fall, when I was sorely in need of confirmation, we came together in the resolve to.share this experience with the students on our annual spring trip. We would

base the trip on a Vision Quest, and he would lead us. I would facilitate and prepare the trip, but he would be our leader and I would also do the Quest.

The students were eager. We baked many loaves of bread and held various dinners to raise the money to help with his apartment and trip expenses while we would be gone. He arranged his time off. We read the books he asked us to read and worked with some of the preliminary exercises. And we all took a First Aid and CPR course.

In early March Walt and his friend Susan, who would act as helper, met us and we worked together for two days shopping and getting ready to leave. We agreed to spend time talking and planning as we traveled, to prepare us for our ultimate goal - a three-day solo time in the wilderness, with only water and animal shelter.

The first part of the trip was a time of learning roles and getting to know each other in this new context. Most of the students had traveled together before, but we also has a Japanese student who was new to us. We had meetings every day during which we centered on various aspects of ourselves - on our backgrounds and families, our goals and dreams, the people who most influenced us, our strengths and weaknesses. At times we were pulled away from our goal of sharing with each other many plans and things to do. Sometimes we had to re-examine leadership roles and work on clarity among just the adults. It's an interesting transition to accomplish, when one whose historical role has been student becomes the teacher, and the teacher becomes the student.

As the group approached the last days before its goal, some deep pain and trouble among us surfaced. Very gently but firmly, Walt led us through that sharing and guided us in ridding ourselves of old mis-perceptions and toward the trust that allowed

each person to participate in an intense individual interview in preparation for our time alone.

We backpacked to our final area, spent time choosing our individual spots - all within a safe distance from base camp, but none within sight of each other. We went out with the leaders to create our marked areas where each pair of us would pick up our replenished water and place our stone to indicate that we were all right. - all within a safe distance of each other.

Then, as the first light appeared the next morning, each of us silently entered a stone circle, left behind something to symbolize ourselves, was smudged in the Plains Indians ceremony of waving the smoke of sage and juniper all round the person, and sent off on our individual walks to our spots.

We all knew that we could stay behind or come back to base at any time, but we also all knew that, each for his or her own reasons,we would stick it out.

The weather was intense - thunder and lightning; sleet and wind; and clear, beautiful sunlight. The moon was bright, illuminating scudding clouds. I alternated between being out in the open, exposed to all of it, and being sheltered deep under the branches of my juniper tree.

I walked the boundaries of the area, watched the first coati-mundi I'd ever seen, and washed myself and some clothing the first day - busy, busy, busy - to pass the time away. The second day was spent mostly in writing and creating shelter. By the third day, finally feeling the effects of fasting, I began to be calm and to really see everything around me. An eagle appeared deep in the valley, and it circled and soared until it was out of sight. What luxury I felt to be able to take the time to watch it for as long as it was in view. I sang the songs I loved and danced them there on my hilltop. I cried in mourning for

the losses in my life and for the changes I would soon be making.

On the last night I built my power circle of the rocks and sotol stem that symbolized the most important aspects of my life thus far. I sat within that circle and built a small fire and meditated as I burned some of the symbols of what I knew I had to leave behind. I slept now and then, but was awake to welcome the first light of day. I was ready then to go back to the warmth of the group.

As each of us came back to base camp,we again entered the circle to be smudged and receive a wonderful welcome back hug from Walt and Susan.

What joy it brought me to see each one return (I was the first one in) with that open clearness and pride of accomplishment on their faces! We all giggled as Chris, our youngest member, came in last - bounding and singing his way across the meadow. We drank our tea and ate some fruit and basked in the realization that each of us had experienced something very special.

We rested for a while, but had to leave our site that day because some passing cowboys warned of really bad weather coming, and getting out for more supplies might become a problem.

During our journey home we found a place each day where we were, again, interviewed within the group. Each of us chose a name and we spoke from within that name. We told of our experience on our quest and shared our decisions. Everyone joined in the interview, but Walt led it. Once again, with mine, his gentle insight and perceptiveness led and encouraged me in completely sharing what was, for me, a momentous decision. And in so doing, I received the total support and trust of the group - something I truly needed at the beginning of the trip, and would truly need in the trying times to come.

We will probably, each in her or his own way, go back to the Santa Theresas. I wonder if I'll see the coati-mundi again. It wasn't a vision or a revelation of what to do - just a quiet knowing and a circle of support.

How do we say thank you for the closing of the circle? The student is the teacher, is the student - as it was ever meant to be.

Walter Strauss lives in Amherst, Mass., where he makes beautiful music and offers his skills in this Rite of Passage Program as well as his background in Environmental Science to people of all ages through both school and camp programs.

Sandy Hurst, the director of Upattinas School & Resource Center, 429 Greenridge Rd., Glenmoore, PA 19343, is a past president of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools and current secretary of the Board of the NCACS. Sandy has been a valuable contributor to *ΣΚΟΑΕ* since its inception. We hope she'll send us more items more frequently. The poetry which follows was written by a diffident but talented student of Sandy's (who prefers to be known by his pen name Basil).

This extraordinary outpouring of the sweet inner truth of young love arrived recently on my doorstep, sent by one of Sandy Hurst's students. It feels to me like a total gift to us all.
I hope you can give basil's rhapsodies the tender sharing of feeling which they deserve. And if you feel inspired to send me your own poems or other literary expression, I'd feel honored, and it would help me also to give basil the honor he has earned! As he says of himself, he is a young tender poet.

(for *a.*)

i see you when my eyes are neither opened nor closed.
you are kept somewhere in between.
hair spun of silk, in thin streams of wind.
the textures of whistling skies.
the clouds take the shape of flowers looping together.
your standing up-head tilted back,
focused with eyes up.
light reflects sensitively
across your bare forehead,
causing it to appear lighter in the center.
and from my position
i can see you wearing a flowing dress
slightly below your knee,
bordering around the middle of your calf.
fine white socks, with specific ruffles about the tops...
and tiny patterns of intricate design
just below that. the dress is blue
with sketches of white and green.
your hair of the perfect brown,
sister of the earth.
and beautiful eyes like crystal of sharpness
like razorblades that would never cut.

your plight avoids adversity.
you've now become blurred,
seen behind tear-stained eyes of mine.
words are whispered between us,
our lips have remained still.
the softness about your mouth
interests me deeply,
how it lifts and lowers
at times when your face stays the same.
might you teach me this childish game.
you are simply the heavens child,
blessed angel.
poets have been born
under your name.
soon you shall ascend back to your home
I only ask you take me with you.

1.
i saw you with both my eyes today,
i peered only full-faced.
your frame was as always, truly delicate.
i watched on perfectly still from afar,
and looked on as you conducted yourself
like a harmlessly beautiful child.
the sight of this
reminded me of my feeble youth
and forced me to break down and cry,
i felt hopeless for the first time
since that childhood,
even more knowing
how i thought it was silly for me to do.
without hesitation or regret i did cry,
and tried desperately to find you
in the confusion of affection and tears.
somehow due to my quickened senses
in any situation i reformed my body
and focused my still watering eyes
to find you once again.

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somewhere were i had left you
moments before this chaos.
you looked unharmed by this episode,
as i thought you would be,
thats one of the things
that fascinates about you.
your naivety is precious.
continuing to go about your way
taking no notice of me
or my eyes carefully taken by observation.
i perceived everything about you today,
and every detail upon that perception,
and within that detail i
flount hints and images of everything
that had been done or seen in my life,
and i placed them accordingly,
as if i were playing some sort of memory game
where you have to match two things
of the same identification,
whether direct or indirect.
i was especially pleased
with the way you smile the whole day,
and carried on without much thought.
you could talk to anyone,and did,
but i sensed a bit of me in you,
and thought you might be
more comfortable or at ease alone.
so in my mind i asked the other children to leave you -
and they, to my suprise, heard my silent command,
and scattered from you like witnesses to a crime.
i enjoyed that sign and had to hold myself
from making noise
that might attract the attention of the others.
this was extremely hard
considering the way that particular moment made me feel. you went on walking, and i follow -
but not too close behind,

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i would very much hate
having to explain myself to you.
and it ruins the natural flow
and easyness of a person
when they know they are being watched.
i would go out of my way to assure your comfort
and make sure you knew nothing
of what went on this famous day.
you seemed to stop and catch a breath.
and for a minute
i thought you were talking to yourself.
when i then found it was the strong wind
that had been moving your lips.
they just yielded to the strength and force of the air.
this also attracted me.
how you seemed to let everything
move so naturally and without warrant.
first you sat down and placed your hands
without measurement
perfectly behind yourself on your elbows.
about six inches from your sides.
in a matter of seconds
you stretched your arms out straight
and laid them back near your head
as you placed your back firmly on the grass
already underneath most of you.
your head fell last.
in the moments of transit
i saw green marks on both your arms.
they indicated to me that the grass was wet.
and full of life.
your arms were held palm up
and bent slightly at the elbows.
they crossed and met somewhere near.
if not exactly at the wrists.
i swooned at the sight of your underarm.
where it was at its finest shade of white.

Anna

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

I received the following poignant historical record of the end of a school within a school that my correspondent Bob Knipe clearly loved very much and still mourns the loss of. This is part of a student paper printed up at the moment of crisis before its demise. Accounts of successful alternative schools that were abandoned for economic or political reasons are very significant in understanding the history of alternative education. I am grateful to Bob for sending on this material, and will be printing more in the future, with Bob's permission.

PROFILED SCHOOLS:
THE LEARNING COMMUNITY:

EMIT
EXTRA!

Unity is a part of Community
March 4, 1976, volume 1, number 1

Administration to L.C.:
"Drop Dead!"
by Steve Anderson

Jack Penha, speaking on behalf of all the teachers, announced today, at a mass community meeting held in room 17 that, "There will be no Learning Community at Mater Christi next year." Some "OH NOs", "WHATs" and "YOUR KIDDINGs" came from the students but most of 'he community was silent, almost as if it were expected.

Mr. Penha went on to explain why. Many students expected to have a community of 120 seniors

and four teachers. This was part of a proposal offered by the administration. However, the teachers felt that this cut, along with other compromises made in the past, would leave the Learning Community "only a hollow shell."

The teachers met and decided that they would operate a community next year only if certain concessions were made. These proposals were presented to the administration at a meeting before the exam recess. Here is what they presented in part:

> Having operated the Learning Community since September, 1972; having received praise and thanks of...students and parents...

The document went on to give a few of the many L.C. praises and accomplishments and state the Learning Community's proposals:

> ...we must now conclude that the request...taken with the...other compromises... made through the years... indicates that the Learning Community would stand only as a hollow shell of its former philosophy and practice.

It goes on to state that the community would not be worth operating, and the system would insure the death of the community and make it "a dumping ground for way-ward seniors." It goes on:

> Therefore... we have agreed ... to accept the administration's proposals... but only with... modifications.
>
> These modifications, in short, were:
>
> 1. That the community be made of *juniors* and seniors.
> 2. The "garden" would be opened, as it was until this year.
> 3. The budget would be allotted to the number of students.
> 4. Any evaluation of the community should be made through instruments for a school within the school program, as opposed to the former system.

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5. Juniors presently in the community who take main school classes will be allowed to continue to take them next year.

The document was signed by Messrs. Penha, Powell, Gilroy, Azrak, Therway, and Siegel. These proposals were rejected by the administration and thus there will be no community next year. When asked for the reasons for the rejection Mr. Penha stated,

> They gave none, nor did we ask for any.
>
> After all, there's a lot of years we are up against. For a long, long time, both teachers and students have been conditioned to look at school and each other in certain narrow ways. What is crucial is for us to look at each other as human beings with a common goal. We all have rules to abide by. Some of them we personally may disapprove of. While we argue to change them and while we work through the available channels to change them, we are forced to abide by them in order to protect and preserve what we have achieved: the Learning Community.
>
> Clearly, as most of you have learned, it is possible to take advantage of the rights granted to us in the Community. Freedom is always like that. But it is still worth it. Most - the vast majority - have recognized that to take advantage of our freedom will ultimately destroy it. And that makes me proud.
>
> Because I prefer to believe that freedom is good for people, that people are naturally good and respond well to freedom.
>
> Of course, we are all human. And that means we all make mistakes. All of us have bad days, lazy days, hungover days.
>
> And finally, thanks to you, for allowing six teachers to have a place where we, too, can be ourselves, find freedom and enjoy school.

Looking Back And Ahead
November 1975
by James W. Penha

Every year, something happens here in the Learning Community. For some reason, there seem to be more smiles per square foot than anywhere else in the building. And more learning. And more humanity. No matter what the confusion, what misunderstandings, what problems have to be confronted in those first weeks - and this year, there were a fair share - somehow, in some way, the Community works.

Why? Is it the faculty? To some degree, maybe. But I should like to believe that any six teachers, not just us who believe in this kind of school could make it work. Is it one course or another? No. They have been different every year.

I think what makes the Learning Community successful year after year is a principle: living and learning are fostered when personal commitment replaces selfishness, when agreement and logic and consensus replace ridiculous rules and laws, and when every individual feels that his voice, his feelings, his very being, makes a difference.

Hopefully, you are not yet sick of hearing about the ideas upon which the United States was founded. Whatever varied opinions we may hold about how America has lived up to those principles, we do, I have found, agree in general that the ideals of democracy and freedom are good and true. If they are right for a nation, then they are right for every part of that nation - including schools.

That's what the Learning Community is all about. And just as citizens get the government they deserve, students will get the school they deserve. Our requests that you make suggestions for improvement of structures and courses rather than just

nod out or complain, that you make it your business to get to know people in the Community other than your old, small circle of friends, that you express yourself freely, that you work your tail off for the best education possible - these requests are real. And although the past few months have been great - thanks to you - we will never stop growing and improving.

The Student Bill of Rights

IN ORDER TO FUNCTION IN THE SPIRIT OF TRUE LEARNING, WE REQUEST THE ADMINISTRATION TO AGREE TO THE FOL-LOWING MEASURES, AND TO HELP ENFORCE THEM NOW AND IN THE FUTURE .

STUDENT BILL OF RIGHTS:

1. Have advance notice of all regulation changes with the idea of being able to vote on acceptance or rejection.

2. Elect and impeach their student government officials (president, vice-president).

3. Wear any neat, comfortable clothes to school with the exception of dungarees, T-shirts, sneakers, tube tops, and halters.

4. Petition other members of the student body and faculty without fear of retribution in the form of marks, suspension, detention, expulsion, or any other means there of,

5. No member of the faculty or administration shall administer any form of physical punishment to any

student, except in event of physical attack by the student.

6. The activity fee will be paid by the individual provided on the number of activities each student participates in.

7. Smoking in second parking lot permitted only during free time and lunch periods.

8. The right of the student to petition a hearing in the student court consisting of an equal number of students, and faculty whenever the student feels that any of his/ her rights have been violated.

SIGNED,
THE COMITTEE

Jon Scott, author of the following article, pointed out to me recently that Albert Lamb, whose "The Experience of Summerhill," was the lead article in the Winter issue of ***ΣΚΟΛΕ****, had referred to Summerhill as "the grandparent of all free schools" - but that actually, as Jon knows from his own boyhood experience, the Modern School Movement, started by the martyred anarchist Francisco Ferrer in Barcelona in 1901 (which generated several schools both in Spain and in the United States), came first.*

The community school which Jon attended was started by Elisabeth and Alexis Ferm on the model of Ferrer's "Escuela Moderna," and was at that time located in Stelton, New Jersey, in the community calling itself "The Colony." See Jo Ann Wheeler Burbank's account of her teaching at that school in the Summer, 1991 issue of ***ΣΚΟΛΕ****.*

And of course, on the "grandparent" issue, Ron Miller points out (in his book **What Are Schools For?**, *Holistic Education Press, Brandon, VT), the work of Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827), represented in the United States by people like William Maclure and Joseph Neef (whose school opened in 1819), later by Bronson Alcott's school, begun in 1827 - as well as Friedrich Froebel's kindergarten movement itself (starting in 1848), from whom Francisco Ferrer drew many of his ideas, came even before them!*

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
by Jon Thoreau Scott

Many sunny days are wasted,
Many nights are long;
In that deep, dark, dusty prison,
For kids who do no wrong.

- Elizabeth A. Scott, Grade four.

I am reading the comic strip "Peanuts".

The little girl says, "Let me get this straight, if I refuse to go to school they throw me in a dungeon with no food or water for ten years?"

"That's right", says Linus.

She asks, "But if I go to school, I go for how long?"

"Twelve years", he says.

She replies, "It's worth thinking about, isn't it?"

Many of us know why.

Why should our schools be thought of as prisons? Could it be that they employ the major function of prisons, confinement? I went to a school which was not like a prison. It was against confinement. It was a school organized by a community of people who desired to have their children attend this special school. It was an early version of what we now call "Free Schools".

Our school was based upon the ideas of Francisco Ferrer, a martyred educator who set up "Escuela Moderna" (Modern Schools) in Spain and was executed for his beliefs that all people should be well-educated, not just an élite few. Ferrer used

principles of Friederich Froebel, the German inventor of the Kindergarten, who thought of children as flowers, each with their own individual beauty. Give them good soil and water and they will grow.

In response to Ferrer's execution in 1909, many Modern Schools were established by people, mostly anarchists, who were interested in Ferrer's ideas about individual freedom. I attended a Modern School from the age of two through fourteen beginning in 1934. It was founded in New York City in 1910, but the parents desired a more cohesive community structure and the school took over an old farm in rural Stelton, New Jersey.

In our school there were no classes - unless a group of students decided one was needed - no exams, no grading and no grade levels. Students were not taught, they learned. And they learned those things which were of most interest to the individual student.

The teachers of my school did not teach, they showed the students how to learn and so we discovered that most important requisite of the educated person, self motivation. Older children helped the young ones learn in this "multi-age" setting. I did not learn to read until I was ten and, of course, it took me only a few days because I was motivated by the desire to read comics books. In a matter of weeks I was reading the young people's classics. I was never taught arithmetic, but at the age of eleven, motivated by jealousy of younger children who could multiply, I learned the multiplication table in less than four hours and learned it well.

Our school had no formal classrooms, no desks for sitting quiet. There were a Kindergarten or play room, art room (the only one with a blackboard), weaving room, ceramics studio, print shop, carpentry and machine shop, large sand-boxes and outdoor play areas, a field for individual garden plots, a small

auditorium for meetings and plays, many sports fields and the woods and fields of an old abandoned farm.

There was a stream nearby on which the community built a dam to make a pond for swimming. I spent many pleasant and fruitful hours boating, swimming, fishing, skating, sled-riding and learning the merits of Ambrose Brook, its flora and fauna. Yes, during school hours! Considered as a pedagogical device, a brook is infinitely superior to a classroom where students are forced, like robots, to practice the "Three R's", so unnecessary to young children, because they have no use for such abstract concepts.

Administrators in Education employ rather useless standardized exams to hold schools "accountable" for the money spent. Let it be known that I later obtained a PhD degree with a specialty in limnology (study of lakes and streams). That's accountability! Had I been faced with the task of learning those "R's" at too early an age, instead of discovering the beauty of Ambrose Brook, might my desire to learn about lakes and streams have been critically wounded? Quite likely.

There were only two "organized" meetings in our day at the Modern School. At 9:00 AM we began the day with announcements and group singing. At 3:00 PM we closed the school day by cleaning the school. There were no janitors. On a weekly rotation, each student was assigned a room to clean and sweep. Periodically we scrubbed and polished floors, painted, repaired things, washed windows and cleaned the school grounds. We ran the heating system and participated in construction when needed. We learned respect for our school and it was always clean. The only other "requirement" was a weekly meeting, run by the students, where we discussed

Missie and pumpkineers getting ready for Hallowe'en

such things as how the school should be run, discipline problems, organized activities such as overnight hikes and field trips. We learned a bit of democracy.

The community of parents participated in the school in a variety of ways, despite the fact that most had to work for a living. Parents, teachers and students organized events related to the School. These were usually fund raising activities such as lectures, concerts, plays acted by the students, picnics and school fairs or bazaars at which crafts and writings of the students were sold to the public. The students helped print the advertisements for these events and distributed them to each house in the community. Once a month Saturday evenings were devoted to meetings of the parents and teachers on running the school.

I often think that I owe the joy of my early education to the direct interest and involvement of my own family and the people of our community in how our school was run. The community was built around our school and the school was a major part of the community. Everyone contributed and their efforts were benefited. The children were better served than those in the schools run by remote Boards of Education. This simple lesson might well be one of the great "secrets" that should be applied in today's schools.

Jon Scott is the head of the Atmospheric Science Department at the State University of New York at Albany - but this role, valuable as it is, doesn't really begin to define Jon as a person. Jon is a guy who "walks his talk" in more ways than simply academic ones. He is extraordinarily gentle, self-motivated, naturally democratic, endlessly interested in all facets of life and people - in short, a being who is totally comfortable being himself! I find this a striking endorsement for his school/community upbringing - and, incidentally, also for

"anarchism," a label which I view as having been so negatively stereotyped by apologists for capitalism that its origin as advocacy for communal and individual self-regulation has been virtually lost. We Free Schoolers are indeed fortunate to have Jon as a friend.

The article that follows details the poignantly tragic fate of one anarchist, Francisco Ferrer, founder of the Modern School Movement, for also "walking his talk." I believe it is important to remember such people, remember their courage and integrity. Otherwise, alternative school people of today may find themselves in the position of "reinventing the wheel," not knowing who their spiritual ancestors are.

SCHOOL AS COMMUNITY; COMMUNITY AS SCHOOL: LEARNING AND TEACHING DEMOCRACY: SCHOOL PROFILE: "LA FARIGOLA":

RECOLLECTIONS
by Pura Perez

The last paragraph in the letter that Francisco Ferrer wrote in the "Model Prison" in Madrid on June 1, 1907, says:

> The Rationalist and Scientific teaching of the Modern School embraces the study of everything that supports the freedom of the individual and the harmony of the collective, with the goal of a regime of peace, love and well-being for all without distinction of classes and sex.

When he faced execution, blindfolded, his spiritual vision gave him the courage to cry out to the world: "Long live the Modern School!" The echo of that cry reached all corners of the earth and assured the continuation of his work in education.

Everyone knows the response to his death. And everyone must come to understand that Francisco Ferrer's decision to open his Modern School in Spain came at the time when Spain was suffering its greatest social repression, with conflicts of work stoppages, exploitation and repression against the proletariat; when the Liberal progressive movement was practically crushed. Ferrer's work and determination can only be described as heroic. Francisco Ferrer was not unaware of the obstacles and difficulties that awaited him at every step, especially the reactionary forces whose attacks finally led to his death. After his death these reactionary forces fought to close down the Modern School and all

Liberal and secular schools in Barcelona and other parts of the country.

By 1910, when the government was changed, the neglect of education had resulted in the illiteracy of two-thirds of the population. To overcome this, the Liberals strongly desired to create Ferrer schools and to open the closed schools and centers again. With Ferrer's school as a model, the Liberals launched a campaign to open the closed centers (Ateneos) again. In 1910 the Liberal institutions joined with Labor to open many unions (Sindicatos) and their Rational Schools. Anselmo Lorenzo was the leading promoter of these schools. He enjoyed the highest reputation among anarcho-syndicalist militants for his knowledge of education.

At the end of 1917, *Solidaridad Obrera* published the following note,

> We are informed as 1917 comes to an end that the Union "La Constancia" of the Textile Industry, is opening its School on January 2,1918. The School will be located at 12 Municipal Passage, in the Clot District.

This was the beginning of the Rationalist School called "Nature School". It soon came to be called the lovingly popular name, "La Farigola" (Catalan for a fragrant lovely flower). It is rumored that it got this name because the boys and girls in the school brought bunches of the beautiful flowers home after hikes or picnics in the mountains. Professor Juan Puig Elias was the directing figure in the Nature School from the beginning until July 1936. At that time, Puig Elias became President of the Popular Council in the New Unified School and the Nature School was transferred to a new tower and a better building.

When my sister and I began to attend night classes at "La Farigola" in September 1933, she was twelve years old and I had just turned fourteen years

of age. We had gone to Barcelona in January 1933 from Jativa, a town in the province of Valencia, where we had lived our entire childhood. Luckily we had been able to go to public school. When the Second Republic was proclaimed in 1931, I had had the opportunity to attend High School until the Railroad Company for which my father worked transferred him to the capital of Catalonia, Barcelona.

At first, we encountered many difficulties — great social conflicts, scarcity of housing. As a result, we had to find work immediately. After a few months, we found a less expensive place to live and moved to the Clot District where we became acquainted with the Nature School and registered right away. I remember that we were received very cordially. Professor Puig Elias asked us a few questions and directed us to our seats. He told us that they did not demand much study or set standards or have examinations. I was greatly surprised when asked what I wanted to study. At first I did not understand and took some time to answer — it was so unexpected for me. I was used to being told what I had to learn, what materials to read and study, what to memorize, and to be prepared to compete to win first place in the class. I was speechless when I learned that none of these practices existed in the Nature School.

The classes were stimulating. We found it very easy to establish a relationship with other students. There was no pressure for competition. And I did not observe any propaganda orientation. (My parents had been advised about this because the school was sponsored by the union but there never was propaganda of any kind.)

My preferences were to study science, anatomy and geography. If we needed books that they did not have at the school, we were told to go to

the Ateneo Library. There they had every type of book that we could borrow. We also went to the Ateneo on holidays because there were always recreational and cultural activities. This continuous contact helped strengthen the good bonds of friendship and respect. We were able to carry on discussions and be with friends. Adolescence was fading away with all the things we were learning. Social questions were so pressing and absorbing that we were led to dream of a future of justice and freedom.

The schools were all based on the same principles and goals, whether they were called "Integral Education" as Paul Robin wished to call it, "Modern School" as Francisco Ferrer called it, or "Rationalist School" as Juan Puig Elias of the "Nature School" called it. The important emphasis was the instruction of the children without external authority. Pupils found their own truth. These were schools where the teachers were patient and pleasant guides indicating the roads that lead to the desired goal. In conventional traditional schools, individuals have little initiative, are passive and ready to follow others, because they spend so many years without expressing their own personality or their own energies.

After July 19,1936, our customary lives changed and we left the school to take on other urgent, necessary tasks. We returned to Valencia once more in June 1937. In Valencia, I was asked to work as a teacher in a collective. Although I did not have the title, the fact that I had studied at "La Farigola" in Barcelona was a true credit. I accepted on condition that I would be the judge of my work since I was not sure if I would be satisfactory. I remained there until the end of the war.

The Director of the school was an Italian comrade, Vicente Consoli. He came to Spain to fight, but, because of his advanced years, they suggested that he work at his profession and he was sent there. His

Spanish was very good and with the passing of time he perfected his accent. The people in the collective regarded him with much affection and in addition to his work as a teacher, he advised them in matters of administration. It should be remembered that, because of the war, many men were away from their homes. Many young people were also away, working on other things. Agricultural workers predominated in the collective and many hands were needed for the work. Women filled the need and children were also asked to help at times with easier tasks. Many adolescents worked full time so that night classes were started for them. There was also a daily meeting for an hour where those who had something to say could discuss conflicts or problems that had arisen during the day.

The school, located in the town plaza, had two large floors. The lower floor was used for meetings and lectures. The upper floor was divided for two classes, with students grouped according to their development. I had a class of 30 of the youngest children. It was my idea that the children's tables be placed in a circle so everyone's face would be in view. This broke with traditional custom but the children loved it. We had various materials that the children worked with their hands. We also had a microscope that was used by the older children and a supply of scholarly materials. Everything went well and the pupils were happy. They suggested what they wanted to do or to learn. Every month we displayed what the classes did downstairs. The parents were satisfied. The days were peaceful. We went to see the vegetable gardens and the orange trees where pupils were able to see the fruit and plants grow. The following day they made drawings of what they had liked. If it had not been for the ghost of war everyone would have been happy because they were living one of the most desired goals of the revolution.

As part of our recreational and cultural activities we developed an artistic group to do important projects including stage scenery in other communities. What the collective produced was exchanged with other collectives although most of the supplies were sent to the fronts.

Little by little, more refugee children began to come to the school. We had to find another teacher and volunteers to help us. The number of refugees increased daily. We had to take care of children who were destroyed psychologically by the war. As tragedy followed us our work took on a very different turn. In some cases it was necessary to leave a sister or mother with the children in the school for several days. Our pupils helped us to help these children as no one had thought was possible. The activity was beyond the normal — but there it was and it had to be taken care of. The children of the village brought their own clothes and toys and accompanied the refugee children to their temporary housing. These were spontaneous acts of solidarity and brotherhood that moved everyone.

This was a part of my life, unique and unforgettable, a time that Albert Camus characterized as "The time of Hope." With all these experiences I understand most clearly the importance of the work of a conscientious teacher. I understand why feelings and sentiments of those who have gone to a free school are different from others who did not have such an education. Those who have had such an education are moved by a sense of solidarity and justice toward the oppressed of every class.

— Pura Perez
July, 1989

It is to be hoped that my citation of earlier "alternative" or "free" schools than Summerhill - like the Modern School or the earlier ones mentioned such as Froebel's Kindergarten Movement - not be taken as in any sense belittling the magnificence of A.S. Neill's achievement as the founder of Summerhill! There is a very real sense in which this English school is even dearer to our American hearts than the more remote European-model schools. And yet, it must also be remembered that Neill's Summerhill too has its origin in the work of educational pioneers who preceded him, as he himself was always first to acknowledge.

Neill cites the work of Homer Lane as having a strong influence on him both in organizational terms and in terms of personal style, Lane was an American whose earlier work in the "Ford Republic" in Detroit had brought him an invitation to London to found a "residential institution" for delinquent boys in Dorset, in 1913 - the "Little Commonwealth". Neill visited the community in 1917. "I myself owe much to Lane," says Neill, in the Introduction to Lane's Talks to Parents and Teachers. According to the publisher's note, Lane in turn had been influenced by the educational writings of John Dewey, whose ideas had developed out of Dewey's own experience in Jane Addams' Hull House in Chicago.

Summerhill's uniqueness comes out of Neill's genius in translating Lane's voluntarism and depth psychological understanding of child nature into the developmental model of psycho-spiritual integrity of which Matthew Appleton writes so eloquently.

We are all indebted to one another in one way or another, it seems to me, and we each bring something unique of our own to our schools and our communities. Neill's model was also strongly influenced by the work

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of his dear friend Wilhelm Reich, the great orgonomic analytic psychiatrist and teacher. By the time of Summerhill's full development as a school/community, Reich and Neill had become the best of friends, and kept that close bond of love throughout their lives. The mutuality of their respect brought mutual influence from the work of each to the other.

Matthew Appleton's article beautifully illuminates the "Reichian" - i.e., the "embodied" - aspect of Neill's brilliant work as well as his wise understanding of the importance of children's "soul status", both in freedom and in captivity.

SCHOOL AS COMMUNITY:

THE ECOLOGY OF CHILDHOOD - A VIEW FROM SUMMERHILL SCHOOL

by Matthew Appleton

Over the past decade or so mechanized Western culture has begun to realize that it must work with nature, rather than against it, if humanity is to survive as a species. The stirring of a new consciousness is beginning to make itself felt, in small, somewhat stumbling ways, as we find ourselves facing a colossal crisis that we can no longer turn back from but must begin to grope our way through as best we can. It is becoming more and more apparent that there is an inherent wisdom in nature which we have ignored for too long. Our ignorance has pushed us closer and closer to the brink of catastrophe.

My concern here though is not with the environment or the atmosphere, which merely reflect the state of our own sickness. Our greatest stumbling

block lies in our war with nature within ourselves. In particular I am concerned with our war with nature within the child, for it is in children that nature comes into our culture most immediately, spontaneously and alive. It is in our dealings with children that we wage this war with nature most arduously, and yet, most sublimely. In this arena we are probably more ignorant of nature's wisdom than in any other, and, in all good faith, we know not what we do.

To look into a new born baby's eyes is like looking into the depths of the cosmos. All the wisdom of the great sages seems to gravitate there, unspoken, unchallenged, alive. Watch the rise and fall of the abdomen and chest, it rolls and ripples in a graceful, wavelike motion, unified and unlaboured. Look at children in play, rooted in the newness and the nowness of the moment, lucid eyes and loose limbs, glowing with life and vitality. Look at what we make of them. Watch that glow begin to fade. See the sullenness and furtiveness that springs up in the eyes, the rigidity around the limbs that replaces natural, graceful movement with more angular expressions. See the breathing falter, become unsure of itself, grow shallow. Observe the absorption of the moment disintegrate into self consciousness, awkwardness and nervous listlessness.

What are we doing? What has been done to us? Is this nature at work, or are we working against nature? If we are to begin to answer these questions we must move education beyond the contours of its present course, at one moment moving towards liberalism, the next towards authoritarianism, and floundering on both banks. We must consider, instead, a new course of questioning, concerned not with how we can best lead the child to conform to the equations of our culture, but, rather, with the ecology of childhood: how can we best nurture it and

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Pensive Heather

allow it to take its natural course? At this point of departure we must give nature's wisdom the greatest scope possible, and in doing so admit our own ignorance. We must focus, not so intently on what we can teach children, but also on what we can learn from them.

One experiment which encompassed such an approach was Summerhill School, founded way back in 1921, by A.S. Neill, as a reaction to his own upbringing and his experiences as a young teacher in Scotland. Instead of being crammed into classrooms and having endless facts thrust at them, under the shadow of the strap and the stick, he wanted to create an environment where children could grow up free of fear, and enjoy their childhood in in its own right. He saw childhood as more than an enslaved precondition to adult life. It was clear to him that children were emotionally crippled by enforced morality which created conflicts in them. By removing the taboos which caused them he sought to remove the conflicts. At Summerhill you were free to do what you liked as long as it did not interfere with anyone else. You did not have to go to lessons if you did not want to. That was no one's business but your own. The school was there to suit the child, rather than the child having to suit the school.

The school was also self-governing. There were weekly meetings whereby the laws were made by everyone, not just the staff. Everyone had one vote, from the youngest child to Neill himself. All had an equal voice. Rather than trying to guide the meeting with his own ideas, Neill would often sit back and see what the children came up with, or make silly proposals to see how the children would respond. Even his serious proposals were sometimes voted out. That was all part of self-government. People who broke laws or interfered with other people's freedom could be "brought up" at the

meeting, and on the one person one vote system, could be fined. These were usually small money fines, or a social fine, such as picking up litter. Neill noted that the children usually veered towards leniency, perhaps because there was no clear division between the miscreants and their judges; they were in a constant state of interchangeability. Neither were staff exempt from being brought up and fined at the meeting.

Given that the children had so much freedom and were able to guide the school in the manner they found most suitable, it was possible to observe much about the nature of children that is usually hidden or lost in an environment governed by adults. The Summerhill experience seemed to belie the generally accepted view that, without discipline and morality, children would become lazy and insolent, even reverting to an inherent, primeval savagery, such as William Golding portrayed in his novel *Lord of the Flies*. Indeed, what Neill observed was that at Summerhill so-called lazy children became actively involved in community life. "Insolent" children became tolerant and respectful of other people, and instead of reverting to savagery, children reverted to what Neill believed to be an inherent "goodness".

Although Neill died in 1973, Summerhill continues along the same lines that he established seventy years ago. It puts its faith in the "goodness" of the child, though I prefer to use the word "integrity" instead of "goodness". By integrity I mean the integrated wholeness of the child, which, when allowed to take its own course, can regulate itself as is most fitting to its own needs, and function as a social being, responsive to the needs of others, and open to life and love. There is still much that can be learned from observing children in a Summerhill environment. As an ex-Summerhillian, now Summerhill parent, said at a recent conference, "You don't learn

about the nature of chickens by studying battery hens". So, in conventional schooling, the ways in which we damage the integrity of the child are not always obvious, whilst at Summerhill the hurt soon begins to surface as part of the healing process. This may manifest itself in many ways.

Left to their own devices children will follow their excitation wherever it takes them. They will express their excitation in sound and movement. The compulsory classroom, however liberal it may be, does not allow this natural excitation to flow as it should. To still their excitation, which is the well-spring of their well-being, children must stiffen and contract against it. They must tighten muscle, and breath shallowly to quieten the thrill of life that pulses and streams throughout their bodies. In this way, children learn, literally, to cut off from nature in themselves, and live a facade instead. How, and to what degree, this manifests itself, is dependent on many factors. But manifest it does, when and wherever natural processes are sacrificed on the altar of culture.

When children arrive at Summerhill, for the first few weeks, they tend to maintain the superficial facade of the "nice", quiet, "good" boy or girl, which is the approved model of our society. When the realization breaks through that approval does not depend on maintaining the facade, then the natural excitation and integrity of the child begins to reinstate itself. At first this may take many bizarre forms, again depending on the form in and degree to which the child's integrity has been insulted. All the pent up excitation rushes to the surface, and with it all the emotions that accompanied and were held in check by the original blocking. The child may begin to express anger (especially against adults), or sorrow, or make various statements of independence, such as not washing. Some children become abusive,

antisocial or obsessive in some way, for example, breaking into things and compulsive stealing. This period, in which all the pent up excitation and emotion begins to come out is the period in which Golding's "Lord of the Flies" might justifiably be set. But the story does not end here.....

No one at Summerhill tries to moralize or philosophize to the children, nor to politicize or spiritualize them. All problems are dealt with practically in the meetings. What we find is that in time, as the suppressed excitation is expressed, and the child's integrity is restored, s/he is able to regulate his or her life in a more harmonious and responsible way. Usually, this is with a maturity that children who have not been allowed to "break out" rarely demonstrate. The child's faith in his or her own natural core is reinstated, and s/he is able to act with a deeper self-understanding, giving a voice once more to the inherent wisdom with which nature conducts itself.

I am not proposing that conventional schooling is necessarily the source of the child's difficulties, but that it tends to compound them. More often than not the problems are rooted in the family. The attitudes, and inability of the parents to live their own lives fully, along with a myriad of cultural considerations, wound the child's integrity. The most distinctive aspect of schooling at Summerhill is that it is based on choice. The school also has a wider function, though, as a sort of extended family, an international community of children. At present we have children from France, Spain, Germany, Morocco, Indonesia, Japan, England and America. Children come from many backgrounds, some well off, some not so well off. Some come with their parents' blessings, and their integrity has been respected and nurtured throughout. Some have been SENT to the school as a last resort: their parents do not know

what else to do with them. The integrity of these children is no longer intact and their confused attempts to reinstate it is problematic at home or at school.

The degree to which the family is able to embrace the integrity of its children reveals itself in the ease with which the child is able to adjust to freedom. Conversely parents often state they have learnt much about themselves by their children being at Summerhill. As the child's integrity grows more complete so does the family's. Where the family is not able to meet the emerging of the child's integrity a conflict situation arises. I think now of a teenage girl who has been with us for over three years now. Every time she tries to establish her integrity the parents pull the carpet out from beneath her feet. They tell her she is stupid. They belittle the school, the only place she has known any happiness, and threaten to withdraw her when she asserts herself at home during the holidays. In such a case the child is caught in a great gulf between tho school, where she is always on the verge of up, and the home, where she is having to clamp shut again.

Usually though, there is a powerful healing period that takes place between the ages of seven , when we first accept children, and thirteen. Experience has taught us not to take on new children over the age of twelve. The release of pent up excitation , combined with the powerful biological drives of puberty, is a recipe for disaster. By the time children have reached adolescence at Summerhill they have already lived out their "delinquent" period, and begun to take on the responsibilities of running the community. It is the big kids who sort out the disputes amongst the smaller kids, put them to bed, organize social events, chair the meetings, and generally have the strongest voice in the community.

There is something to be gleaned from this. It tells us something about the ecology of childhood that could be of great significance in a society where adolescent discontent and delinquency is such a problem. Just as we have begun to realize the ramifications of the abuse of nature around us, so we can begin to tackle the problems of the abuse of nature within us. In all areas of life our injured nature is showing us the same signs. The booming industry in therapy is another facet of the same picture. People are beginning to voice their sense of loss, to articulate the emptiness they feel inside them, and rediscover the hurt child frozen within. Moreover, this new therapy industry is not so much aimed at the people society would deem as "victims", but at those who by society's measure are successes: the up and coming, the well to do, the professional.

The question of health is a far reaching one. We have learnt enough to know that wherever nature's wisdom is ignored, then nature's discontent finds a voice. My definition of health here is not simply a lack of the symptoms of sickness, but the ability to fully establish one's own personal integrity.

When Neill founded Summerhill he stated he wanted a school that would "follow the child". Allowed to define his or her own needs the child often displays an instinctive intelligence that our cultural creeds do not recognize. A young boy came to the school suffering from chronic asthma. Back in Japan his mother did not acknowledge his problem and would leave him alone in the house without medication, so that he had a great deal of anxiety about returning home for the holidays. At Summerhill he continued to have very severe attacks, but was able to enjoy a fairly full life, playing and socializing with other children. He also came to develop very trusting relationships with the adults at the school. As I got to know him, and he became

more relaxed with me, he would take my fingers in his mouth and suck on them. As he did this, he began to spontaneously kick his legs and move his arms like a baby, and make deep, gurgling sounds in his chest and throat. It became clear to me that he was living out an earlier phase in his life that he had missed out on, and in doing so was re-establishing his integrity, and with it his potential for health. His asthma has not disappeared, but since that time he has not suffered from the severe attacks he had before.

On another occasion a child seeing a young goat being fed with a baby bottle asked if he might have one himself. Within a week half the community had baby bottles, and visitors to the Saturday night meeting were surprised to see even big sixteen year old lads sucking away. Apart from the odd bout of leg pulling no one was really derisive about this temporary reversion to infantile desire, and a definite air of contentment permeated the community at this time. As the main purveyor of bottles, though, I had attracted a somewhat notorious reputation at the local chemist's.

Parental anxiety is a great source of injury to the integrity of the child. Children with over-protective parents inevitably spend their first few weeks at Summer-hill bumping into things, falling over and generally injuring themselves. They are uncoordinated, clumsy and have lost their trust in their own ability to function coherently. In time their integrity heals itself, and they are off in the woods, climbing trees and running around, as nimble and agile as nature intended. The children are not supervised in their activities as they are in most schools, and yet the accident rate is very low, despite the potential dangers that exist In such exhilarating adventures. A teacher, visiting the school recently, became so anxious that she nearly had to leave a room in which

children of all shapes and sizes were milling around with hot mugs of tea in their hands. This is an everyday event at Summerhill, and as yet, no one has been scalded.

Equally, parental anxieties about learning poses problems for children, who if uninterfered with would learn much quicker. Many children do not attend lessons with any regularity for years, and yet, when they are motivated from within, they learn quickly and efficiently. When children are allowed to follow their excitation things happen naturally and spontaneously. One of the greatest sources of anxiety of our times is the fear of what we do not know, and yet this is one of the foundation stones of our education. If you do not know it is because you are stupid, or lazy. If you do not know, you will not pass your exams. Motivated by the fear of not knowing children are continually being stuck in frames of reference that are quickly becoming outdated. At a time, when especially in the sciences, humanity is making vast leaps into the unknown, surely it is time that education began to function around the desire to learn, rather than the fear of not knowing. Again, child nature is not understood, and educationalists and parents are stuck in the belief that children need to be pushed to learn. This inevitably damages the child's natural desire to learn. Freedom to not attend classes implies a certain faith in the child's inherent will to learn, and with the confidence which arises from this faith, children at Summerhill tend to learn in a relatively short time what it takes conventionally raised children years to learn.

Summerhill has been accused of neglecting the academic, and concentrating on the emotional. This is true only in the sense that, as Neill stated, " If you look after the emotions, the intellect will take care of itself." What is important is not how much a child can learn in a given time, but that the child's desire

to learn, when s/he is ready to, is not damaged. The emotionally whole child learns at a ferocious speed what is relevant to his or her own needs at the time. Even if the bulk of academic learning occurs after the conventional period allocated for education, it will always be achieved more fully if entered into wholeheartedly. The child who has been pushed into the academic labyrinth before s/he is ready, often spends more time and energy trying to thrash through dead ends than s/he does making the progress s/he would if nature was allowed to take its own course.

An eleven year old boy, whose parents were very anxious about his inability to read, came to me for private lessons. A series of bad experiences with teachers at previous schools had left his self-esteem very low, and he believed himself to be stupid. After a few lessons I realized he was insincere in his desire to read, but was more concerned with trying to please his anxious parents. I suggested to him, that instead of labouring the point, I would read him a book by an American Indian Medicine Man, which he had showed interest in before. Soon he was looking over my shoulder and picking out words that he would never have been able to decipher whilst the motivating factor was the pressure of HAVING to learn to read.

Another boy, of about the same age, whose parents were both ex-Summerhillians, and supported him for who he was, decided, completely of his own accord, that he wanted to learn Japanese. He asked one of his Japanese friends to teach him. Within a couple of months he was able to read, write, speak and understand large chunks of the Japanese language. It is my own belief that if children were allowed to follow their excitation unhindered by unnecessary adult interference they would each find the natural genius within them. Genius has its root

in genuineness, and if children were allowed to do what they were genuinely interested in their genius would emerge. If doing and being were not so severely segregated, nature would be more fully able to express its inherent wisdom.

Given that we live in a consumer society, and that children at Summerhill are able to dictate their own laws by which to live, it is also interesting that expensive toys and television play a very small part in the children's lives. There are various self-imposed regulations about the viewing of television, and it would seem that most children prefer the real contact of living human beings to the pseudo intimacies of the T.V. tube. Television is watched, and enjoyed, as are computer games, but they do not take on the all pervasive distraction to real life that they do in so many homes.

Although Summerhill plays a therapeutic role for many children, its primary function is prophylactic. The principle of the school is to protect and nourish the integrity of the child before the damage is done, although in practice this is rarely the case. Experience has shown that even though children whose integrity has been severely undermined can benefit from the school, it may distract the community from meeting the needs of the other children, to whom freedom comes more readily. The school's commitment to children with "problems" must always be relative to the make up of the community as a whole. Essentially though, Summerhill is Utopian in its approach. It demonstrates a natural wisdom, an inherent integrity in children, that goes way beyond the vision of contemporary society. It exposes our ignorance in such matters, and raises questions that many would prefer not to ask. Often it reminds us of the forgotten pains of our own childhoods, which we have learnt to sublimate into the social fabrications of our culture.

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What Summerhill advocates it has consistently lived throughout its seventy years of existence. It is no mere theory. Even in this, though, Summerhill has had to accept many compromises, which inevitably limit its scope in such a demonstration of child nature. If possible the school would only accept the children of parents who fully believe in, and support, the integrity of their children. As yet, though, such parents are rare. To meet the demands of the society we live in, the school provides supply exam courses for its pupils. The children are well aware that they must pass exams to make their way in the world. Mostly they do well in their exams, but this emphasis on education through fear of not knowing cannot but have some effect on their natural desire to learn.

As well as endowing children with a inherent wisdom nature has also endowed children with sexuality, which, in adolescence, is at its most intense. Unfortunately, the law of the land has decreed that this sexuality should not express it self in the fullness it deserves anthropological evidence suggests that ill cultures which have been affirmative towards childhood and adolescent sexuality, there is a distinct lack of promiscuity, sexual perversion, venereal disease, rape, or the subjugation of women and children. Our culture is riddled with all these things, along with a generally immature, unhealthy attitude towards our sexual feelings. Nature expresses itself sexually in its young. We are the only species to deny that sexuality, and the only species to suffer from sexual anxiety. Perhaps, again, we should start to respect nature, rather than work against it .

We live in a time when the educational world is moving more and more towards rigid, academic standards, metered out by consistent testing at ever younger ages. The ethic of the fear of not knowing is becoming more deeply entrenched than ever. It is

ironic that at a time when the British education system is moving ever closer to the Japanese system, nearly half the pupils at Summerhill are Japanese. If it wanted to, the school could fill itself twice over with Japanese children, and is frequently visited by Japanese educationalists who are looking to Summerhill to solve some of the grave problems they are now beginning to admit exists in their schools. Socially, children in our culture have more the status of commodities than living, feeling beings in their own right. They must be "presentable". They must be "sweet" and "loveable", like E.T., or Bambi. Children's clothes become more expensive, as they become more geared towards adult aesthetics and less to the needs of the children. The demands to stay clean, and "be good" are more palpable than ever. Even if this is not the everyday reality, it is the model by which success is measured.

The way of life that Summerhill demonstrates cannot be simply reduced to yet another form of "alternative education." It an attitude towards children, and ultimately, an attitude towards life. Personally, I would no more desire to impose my values on a child than I would lock up a homosexual, deprive women of the vote, or subjugate another race because its beliefs or skin colour were different from mine. Better a child be totally absorbed in reading the Dandy or the Beano than forced to read a Shakespeare play s/he is not interested in. The Bash Street Kids have as much a place in the scheme of things as Hamlet. Let the child follow his or her own excitation and an interest in and love of life will always be there. When we consistently interrupt the flow of their excitation we fragment our children's integrity, we cut them off from the nature they are rooted in. When we begin to study the ecology of childhood we find a deep wellspring of wisdom that the over cultivation of conventional education largely

ignores and obscures. Throughout the planet nature is protesting at our treatment of it, not only in the atmosphere and environment, but in our schools and homes too. When we have learnt to acknowledge the wisdom of nature in our children, our understanding of nature's wisdom in the world and in ourselves will deepen of its own accord. We have already made the small step of advocating free range chickens; when will we make the great step of advocating free range children?

Matthew Appleton is a houseparent at Summerhill School. His splendid article is reproduced here with his kind permission.

Additional note: just as we were about to go to press, a letter arrived from Albert Lamb at Summerhill describing a rather disastrous and widely-publicized (in England, so far) film that has been made at the school which presents a very misleading image of the current atmosphere there.

Albert Lamb is an American, and a graduate of Summerhill who spends a lot of time helping to support his old school. He is also known to members of NCACS as a father whose ex-Summerhillian daughter Rosie has been a member of the national Board. Albert writes to all friends of Summerhill to ask them to use discrimination if viewing the film. The entire letter is reproduced in the Letters section.

I was a visitor at Summerhill last October, met Zoë and Matthew Appleton, and spent quite a bit of time with Albert as well as with some of the younger kids. I can verify everything Albert is saying about the school and its present administration and atmosphere. The news of the tragic event he mentions - the death of Akira in Japan - was received while I was there - and the whole school went into a state of deep grief. This is not the response of an unfeeling, inhuman community! What we are seeing here is, I believe, what Reich called "the emotional plague." It is not consciously intended, but the unconscious hostility is none less real for this reason - and sometimes is even greater simply because it is unconscious.

REPRINTS:

A TEACHER SHOULD KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT THE SUBJECT HE PROFESSES TO TEACH

"In my London school I succeeded a line of excellent teachers of drawing. I had not been long in the school when Di, aged 15, looked over my shoulder one day and said: "Rotten! You can't draw for nuts!
A week later Malcolm looked at a water colour of mine.
"You've got a horrible sense of colour," he said brightly .
Then I began to wonder why everyone in school was much more deep on drawing and painting than they had ever been in the days of the skilled teachers. The conclusion I came to was that my bad drawing encouraged the children. I remembered the beautiful copybook headlines of my boyhood, and I recalled the hopelessness of ever reaching the standard set by the lithographers. No child should ever have perfection put before him. The teacher should never try to teach; he should work alongside the children; he should be a coworker, not a model."

The above is quoted from Neill's writings: A Dominie's Log - 1916.

ELIMINATING FREEDOM IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY
by Trevor J. Phillips, PhD.

Not only may we citizens be plagued with insufficient knowledge and information, we may also suffer from too much! Erich Fromm, in his classic *Escape From Freedom* (1940), maintained that in attempting to carry out the 'obligations' demanded by a free society —thinking for oneself, expressing oneself freely, to cite only a couple — one may become distressed, even scared by the possible outcomes, realizing, in an existential sense, how totally alone one is in the world. As a consequence, some of us refuse to become involved, succumbing instead to the big-brotherliness of authoritarian figures, political or religious, who promise happiness and security. The price? The surrendering of personal decision-making and knowledge-gathering. Of course, this is seen as a small sacrifice compared to being able to give up such a burden. In fact, it is, for many, no sacrifice at all. Their 'escape from freedom' is complete.

Enter the schools and their role in a democratic society. Perhaps nobody has expressed the nature of this role better than philosopher/educator John Dewey. It could well be argued, as indeed I do, that the role as expressed by him has not changed in the half century since he wrote:

> Only as the coming generation learns in the schools to understand the social forces that are at work, the directions and the crossdirections in which they are moving, the consequences they might produce if they were understood and managed with intelligence — only as the schools provide this understanding, have we any assurance that they are meeting the challenge which is put to them by democracy.
>
> –JOHN DEWEY, Problems of Men (1937), p. 43.

"The challenge ... [of] democracy." I suppose the main theme of this essay is that all too frequently we fail to view democracy as a challenge in Dewey's sense, and do not see that our institutions — particularly the schools —have a specific function — a "role "— that charges them with living up to the standards set by democracy or, more specifically, with preparing their citizens to be active participants in the skill of knowing and thus in the preservation of the very democracy we profess to hold so dear.

The point is, and it is regrettable that this has to be said, 'democracy and 'freedom and other values our society cherishes, too frequently are regarded as antiques, gathering dust in musty comers of our heritage, or hauled out on public display on special occasions such as the 4th of July, or when the citizens believe those values are threatened. Dewey posed the question eloquently:

> What are we doing ... to translate those great ideas of liberty and justice out of a formal ceremonial ritual into the realities of understanding, the insight and the genuine loyalty of the boys and girls in our schools? ... How far are we permitting a symbol to become a substitute for the reality?
>
> [*Problems of Men, p.* 43. My emphasis. The issues precipitated by the Supreme Court's 1989 ruling regarding the constitutionality of flag-burning is as cogent an example of this symbol vs reality matter as could be imagined.]

Precisely! And how frequently those who lead would prefer the led to focus on symbols rather than on reality. The reason should be self-evident: Symbols call for passive reverence; the reality, for which symbols are the 'short-hand', calls for active participation, and, frequently, protest. [In contemporary media-ridden times, the term 'image' is even more appropriate than 'symbol'!]

The point I hope is obvious: Knowing is crucial to what we choose to call The American Way of Life. Actually, it's crucial to every democracy ... to every human on earth. And even though we are, as it were, born to know [perhaps, even, born knowing!], the need must be fulfilled, satisfied, and the skills of knowing sharpened. (A fear of knowing is, ironically, the other side of the coin, but that's another story! See Abraham Maslow's *Toward a Psychology of Being*, chapter 5.)

Democratically elected they may be, it should not be surprising to learn that our leaders will not always approve of schools that are designed to perform this particular task of inculcating democracy. (The public itself is probably opposed to them in this form.) Schools seem most (though shortsightedly) appreciated when they act as glorified babysitters, helping to keep kids 'off the streets,' transmitting 'the collective wisdom of the ages,' and preparing kids for jobs by giving them the skills deemed necessary for successful employment: the 3 R's together with punctuality, politeness, tidiness, obedience. But the way I see schools — and those who teach in them coincides with Dewey's vision, formulated in 1922, causing raised eyebrows then, and uneasiness even in our supposedly enlightened times.

What would happen, he asked,

> ... if teachers become sufficiently courageous and emancipated to insist that education means the creation of a discriminating mind, a mind that prefers not to dupe itself or to be the dupe of others? Clearly, they will have to cultivate (in themselves and their students) the habit of suspended judgment/ or scepticism, of desire for evidence, of appeal to observation rather than sentiment, discussion rather than bias ... When this happens, schools will be dangerous outposts of a humane civilization. But they will also begin to be supremely interesting places.
>
> *Education as Politics*, p. 140-141.

What more glorious a wish for our schools than that expressed in that final sentence!

Postscript: In his dissenting opinion in the case of Hazelwood School District v Kuhlmeier (January, 1988), Supreme Court Justice William Brennen warned his colleagues on the Court — a majority of whom had, in effect, voted to give school administrators broad latitude to suppress controversial stories in student newspapers — that the decision could convert public schools into "enclaves of totalitarianism ... that strangle the free mind at its source."

"Enclaves of totalitarianism" [Brennen]... "Dangerous outposts of a humane civilization." [Dewey]

The choice (in a democratic society) is most definitely ours.

Trevor Phillips is Chairman of the Department of Educational Foundations & Inquiry, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio

The man
of virtuous soul commands not nor obeys.
Power like a desolating pestilence
Pollutes whate'er it touches: and obedience,
Bane of all genius, virtue, freedom, truth,
Makes slaves of men, and of the human frame
A mechanized automaton.

SHELLEY

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To contact the Foundation, write Mrs. Betta Ehrenfeld, President, 15th Street School Foundation, 4 Jane St., New York, NY 10014.

ANOTHER LOST GENERATION
California schools are overflowing — and broke
by Michael Meyer

Jose Monterosa, a school psychologist in Los Angeles, couldn't believe little Sonya's composure. The 11-year-old was walking home from class when a man killed her companion with a machete. The girl showed no signs of shock, and very little surprise. The reason: Sonya comes from El Salvador, says Monterosa, where she had grown accustomed to violence. For her, school in L.A. was just another Third World combat zone.

Take any of the problems that beset American education: underfunding, violence, high dropout rates, illiteracy, teen pregnancy. California shares them all, and more. And consider this: though California spends less on education per student than any industrial state in the nation, its student population is exploding — fueled by a wave of mostly poor, mostly non-English speaking immigrants — many of them illegal. The situation has grown so desperate, says state schools Superintendent Bill Honig, that California would have to build a new 600-student school *every day for five years* just to maintain its sorry status quo. What is that status quo? Schools so crowded that teachers call them holding pens. Educators quitting in droves. Parents opting out of the system. A "lost generation" of children who are as much victims of their schools as beneficiaries.

How did things get so bad? After all, not so long ago California's schools were among the nation's finest. The answer is partly demographics. High birthrates and a flood tide of immigrants have boosted California's population by 26 percent over the last decade; by the year 2000, the number of children in school will rise 46 percent, to nearly 7

million. Two thirds of these newcomers will be foreigners. Asians living in California have doubled since 1980; Latinos have grown by 70 percent. By some estimates, as many as a third of California's inner-city students are in the country illegally.

Chronic overcrowding is the most visible result. California classes average 28 students, largest in the nation, after Utah's. But it's not unusual for a single teacher to have 35 or more children. To cope with the crush, many schools are switching to a staggered, "multitrack" calendar that allows them to operate year round. Ethnicity is a challenge in itself Nearly 100 languages are spoken in state schools. In San Francisco, classes may well be taught in Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, Tagalog, Korean, Polish, Russian and Armenian.

Ethnic diversity has reached an extreme in southern California. "Los Angeles is the new Ellis Island," says Helen Bernstein, head of L.A.'s teachers union. She offers a graphic snapshot of the city's students. "The majority of children we teach live in poverty. One of every four babies in L.A. is born to a young or unwed mother. More than 20 percent of the city's adults are illiterate. Three quarters of our children enter kindergarten speaking only Spanish. Many graduate from high school without being able to read or write, add or subtract fill out job applications or understand simple instructions. The Los Angeles public education system is in intensive care."

Leaky roofs: California created many of its difficulties. The state spends only $4,500 per student each year (compared to $8,300 in, say, New Jersey). Reason: California's population explosion, coupled with Proposition 13 and other tax-limitation measures that ban local school financing. The recession hasn't helped, either; real expenditures per student are expected to fall by at least $350 next

year. Schools across the state are letting teachers go, cutting programs for gifted or handicapped children and eliminating "extracurriculars" like art and music and phys. ed. San Francisco's Richmond school district brushed with bankruptcy last year - so did Montebello the 12th largest of the state's 1,012 school districts. San Diego has cut routine maintenance: plugged toilets get fixed, but forget leaky roofs or broken drinking fountains. L.A. schools are so strapped that teachers shell out, on average, $1,200 yearly to buy their own classroom supplies.

Small wonder that teachers are quitting in droves. Gretchen Dockweiler counts among the disillusioned. For 20 years she taught in California's public schools—before quitting in frustration to become a real estate agent. "Often I would go home in tears," she says. "I had 43 children in my last fifth-grade class, only 10 of whom spoke English." Almost everywhere, it seems, you meet former teachers, all with tales of burnout and fear of school violence.

Urban pioneers Parents are also giving up. In Los Angeles, one in eight children goes to private or parochial school. Michele and Robert Zapple never considered themselves urban pioneers. They lived a comfortably suburban life on the fringes of the San Fernando Valley, a tranquil world of swimming pools and, they thought, good neighborhood schools. But when their son entered first grade — a very different world of gangs and over-crowded classrooms — the Zapples opted out. Withdrawing their son from school, they joined a home-education co-op where parents do the teaching. Says Michele, "Welcome to the new frontier."

But California educators don't have the choice that the Zapples have, and they're scrambling for solutions. As in other states, they are pushing parents to take more responsibility for children's edu-

cation, pulling local businesses into "adopt a school" programs, improving efficiency by delegating more budget and curriculum decisions to local authorities (so-called school-based management). Schools czar Honig recently proposed to "radically change the way schools do business." His recommendation: scrap the "shopping mall" approach to education — where kids drift through a traditional liberal-arts curriculum — and instead force students into a specialized "major," either in an academic discipline (such as mathematics or literature) that prepares a student for college, or a vocation (such as health care, auto mechanics or graphic arts) that leads directly to a job. Says Honig: "Kids have to see a payoff between education and life."

Some would say that the problem is less the curriculum than the administration. Talk to virtually any California teacher, and you hear angry reports of corruption and mismanagement: administrators who skim funds, demand kickbacks from suppliers, place relatives and friends in high paying jobs. Among recent scandals, just in Los Angeles: an education-consulting firm that billed the city for services to students who did not exist, a schools superintendent who (in the midst of a budget crisis) paid $250,000 to speech writers and public-opinion pollsters. In March, Honig himself was indicted for having allegedly steered more than $222,000 of federal funds to an educational-consulting company headed by his wife. He denies the charge. But a fact remains: L.A.'s unified school district alone covers 708 square miles, employs 34,000 teachers at 850 schools and educates (if that's the word) some 825,000 students. Can such a cumbersome, overburdened bureaucracy be changed?

Body blow: Skeptics have come up with a slew of tear-it-down-and-start-over "reform" initiatives. None is more controversial than "parental choice,"

offering state financing to parents who send their kids to private school. Other states have experimented with similar plans, but none so sweeping as California's. If its sponsors gather 616,000 signatures by June 25 (they're nearly there) the initiative will be placed on California's November ballot. If approved by a majority of voters, it will become law—and, opponents say, deal a body blow to public education. Parents choosing private or parochial schools (or no school) would receive a $2,500 voucher for each child, spending at public schools losing students would be correspondingly reduced. The question will spark a fiery debate, for it pits choice and taxpayer rights against the future of the state's schools.

Meanwhile, another important test is coming up—a June referendum on a $1.9 billion bond issue for school construction. The vote goes to the heart of California's crisis: too many kids, too few schools. If voters turn it down, there will be no new money. Overcrowding will get worse. Fewer teachers will be hired. Those most hurt will be those whom teachers call "kids at risk" — children who don't speak English, who can't keep up, who need special help to stay in school, adapt to a new country or simply join society. Given the state's failures to date, the choice might seem obvious. Alas, in California it isn't.

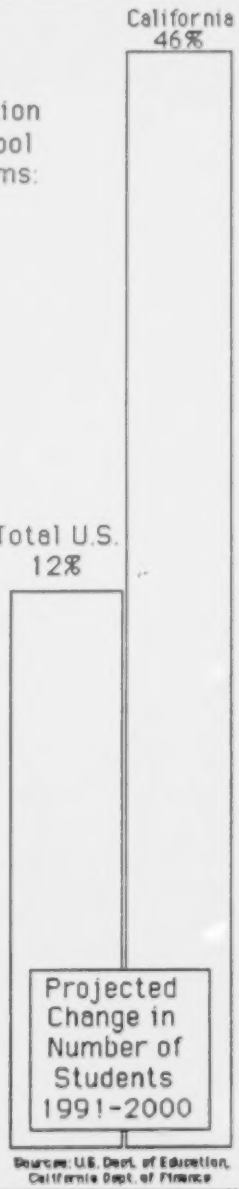
KIDS AT RISK

California's booming population is straining a besieged school system. The biggest problems:

- Ethnic challenge: Nearly 100 languages are spoken in California schools. In this decade, two thirds of the new students will come from outside the United States.

- Proposition 13: California spends less per student than any industrialized state. Proposition 13 and other tax-limitation measures ban local school financing.

- Less funding: Cuts in federal funds hurt, but not as much as those made by the state in three years, it has slashed more than $1 billion from the education budget.



Sources: U.S. Dept. of Education, California Dept. of Finance

A Day on the Concrete Battlefield

It began with a routine press release, followed up with a phone call. Before I knew it, I found myself in a program that anoints California businessmen and community leaders "Principals for a Day." My assignment: Miles Elementary in east L.A. With nearly 3,000 students, it is the nation's biggest — a sprawl of yellow concrete buildings. That most of the kids speak Spanish makes it an educator's ultimate challenge. After a brief swearing-in where I promised to "eagerly do the most important job in the world with no resources, inadequate staff and rundown facilities," I swigged a cup of coffee and reported for duty.

A journal:

7:20: A quick tour of the playground, a concrete strip of landing-field proportions. Kids running, doing calisthenics, playing volleyball. Typical American scene —except hardly anyone speaks English.

7:30: The bell rings. Kids scatter to class. First item of business: Fabian Serrano, 9, returns after a three-day suspension for scrawling graffiti on a wall. Mother, sister and aunt come into my office, concerned and apologetic. "You must respect your school as much as your home," intones vice principal Peter Riddal. Somebody translates. The relatives nod. Fabian smirks.

7:50: Beatriz S., fresh from Guatemala, registers her three girls, 6, 7 and 9. None has ever attended school. (Miles has kids from every country in Central America, more than half of them here illegally.)

8:00: The cafeteria. Myrna Foster and her staff of 13 will serve 2,400 meals today, nearly all paid for with federal free-lunch vouchers. What's for breakfast? "Hot dog." Lunch? "Hot dog."

8:30: Lucille Niki's second grade. Kids' drawings and teaching aids taped on the walls: WHAT TIME:

IS IT? QUE HORA ES? Half her 36 kids are quietly playing or drawing; the others sit at her feet for their daily reading lesson. There's no time for catch-up, no individual attention. "Kids who need special help get left behind," says Niki. Her frustration pours out. "I'm a good teacher, yet many of my kids will end up illiterate."

9:30: Police detective Ray Martin takes charge of a parent-teachers' meeting on violence in the schools. "Gangs begin recruiting as early as age 8." Miles is pretty safe; but next door, at the junior high, kids pack guns. "By the time they're 12," Martin tells me, "some of these children will be terrorists."

10:30: At district headquarters, the annual "Enrollment Road Show." Principals and administrators meet to divvy up students and teachers. Two thirds of L.A.'s schools are "maxed out," says administrator Grant Lansan. "In two or three years, there won't be any more space." Then you'll get 40 or even 50 kids to a class.

12:50: Meeting with Terri Rogers, Los Angeles Department of Children's Services. A fifth grader, 14, is allegedly molesting his two sisters, 6 and 10. The parents deny everything, partly because they are illegal aliens and fear deportation. "I'm afraid of my brother," the 6-year-old had told Rogers. " It hurts. "

1:00: An abstract discussion with staff over lunch. Is America a "melting pot" or a "salad bowl"? Says one teacher: "We must cherish ethnic uniqueness, not 'melt' everyone together." It occurs to me that either way, L.A. isn't coping very well.

1:45: Nurse Angelina Nicolas has seen more than 50 kids today, mostly for lice, eye and ear infections and other hygiene problems. "This is often the only medical attention these kids ever get," she says. Miles is lucky: many L.A. schools have no nurse.

2:00: At last, something more heartening. Kids enthusiastically working in a dazzling computer lab,

donated by Apple and IBM. A talk with "CrossAge Tutors," older kids who take younger children in hand, helping them with sports or classwork and instilling a new sense of self-esteem.

2:30: School's out. Thousands of kids return to the playground, where many stay until evening without supervision. Elizabeth Lamori, a second-grade teacher, prepares crayon and paint boxes for the morning. Not standard school issue; she bought them herself. "This is a battlefield," she says. "But we're surviving, and the children are happy." Are they also learning? A pause. "Most are," she finally answers.

3:00: A conversation with Betty Morin, the *real* principal. She hasn't given me genuine responsibility; the job is too important to fool around. Miles is not just a school, nor are its teachers merely teachers. "We are social workers, family counselors, day-care providers and stand-in parents," Morin tells me. "It's demanding work, and increasingly thankless. "Everyone says the schools are a mess. That teachers have to do better. But we're on over-load. Our budget was chopped 15 percent last year, and 20 percent the year before. Where is public support for education?"

Miles works wonders with what it has, I've discovered. Betty Morin runs the place with military efficiency. But the real problem is money — not enough money for schools and teachers, not enough for the children. Miles spends about $4,000 per student each year, well below the national average and about half the amount spent by New York. I think about that, driving home to West Los Angeles, where palm trees blow in ocean breezes and every house seems to cost a million dollars.

M.M.

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COMMUNITY AS SCHOOL:
REPRINTS: Two from *In Context:*

Now we come to the flip side of our topic - because ***both*** *school as community* ***and*** *community as school must be considered if we are to "ride the rapids" of change creatively and successfully. My metaphor is drawn from the title of Robert Theobald's first community-written book - q.v., below - and see also the interview with Robert. But first, I invite your prayerful attention to Scott Peck's words on community.*

THE JOY OF COMMMUNITY

Are organizations beset by "demons" and in need of "exorcism"? M. Scott Peck says they are - and that community is their salvation

an Interview with M. Scott Peck, by Alan AtKisson

In modern times, the idea of "community" has increasingly been expanded to include not just the place where one lives, but the web of relationships into which one is embedded. Work, school, voluntary associations, computer networks - all are communities, even though the members live quite far apart.

But according to psychiatrist and author M. Scott Peck, for any group to achieve community in the truest sense, it must undertake a journey that involves four stages: "pseudocommunity," where niceness reigns; "chaos," when the emotional skeletons crawl out of the closet; "emptiness," a time of quiet and transition, and finally, true community, marked both by deep honesty and deep caring.

Peck's thinking on this subject is detailed in his 1987 book, The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace *(Simon and Schuster). He is the author of*

> *The demons can range all over the map, from misuse of political power to apathy, and from corporate lies to organizational myths that are unrealistic.*

four other books, including the phenomenally popular The Road Less Traveled. *His newest work, due for publication by Bantam in 1992 or 1993, will focus on organizational behavior.*

Peck - "Scotty" to all who know him - is also the co-founder of the Foundation for Community Encouragement, created to support community-building work, and he and other Foundation staff have since conducted over 275 community building workshops. Here he reflects on that experience and the challenges - and joys - of working together to be in community...[*For more information on the Foundation, see the box on page 92.*]

Alan: *In the first sentence of* The Different Drum *you say, "In and through community lies the salvation of the world." You've done five years of community-building work since writing those words. Do they still hold true for you?*

Scotty: Very much so. I had very little experience with community building when I finished the book in 1986. But I now have a great deal of experience, having worked with organizations and groups

throughout North America and in the United Kingdom through the Foundation for Community Encouragement. I'm more convinced than ever of the truth of those opening sentences.

My second book, *People of the Lie*, is on the subject of evil. In the second chapter, on group evil, I quoted the Berrigans' saying that perhaps the greatest single problem we have is to figure out how to metaphorically "exorcise" our institutions. Recently, I realized that the Foundation is doing exactly that - by building community within those institutions. Of course, to do an exorcism you have to have a willing patient, and a willing organization doesn't come down the pike every day.

Alan: *What are the metaphorical demons that need to be exorcised? And what does "community" mean in this context?*

Scotty: The names of the demons range all over the map, from misuse of political power to apathy, from corporate lies to organizational myths that are unrealistic, and so forth.

Community can be one of those words - like God, or love, or death, or consciousness - that's too large to submit to any single, brief definition. At the Foundation we consider community to be a group of people that have made a commitment to learn how to communicate with each other at an ever more deep and authentic level. One of the characteristics of true community is that the group secrets, whatever they are, become known - they come out to where they can be dealt with.

By other definitions, a community is a group that deals with its own issues - its own *shadow* - and the shadow can contain any kind of issue. We have tried unsuccessfully at the Foundation to come up

MISSION STATEMENT: THE FOUNDATION FOR COMMUNITY ENCOURAGEMENT

Founded by M. Scott Peck and ten other people in 1984, the Foundation is a tax-exempt, nonprofit educational foundation providing workshops, seminars, consultations and presentations with a focus on building and sustaining community. The text below is their mission statement. For more information, contact them at 7616 Gleason Road, Knoxville, TN 37919-6816, Tel. 615/690-4334.

The Foundation for
Community Encouragement (FCE)
empowers people, in a fragmented world,
to discover new ways of being together.
Living, learning, and
teaching the principles of community,
we serve as a catalyst for
individuals, groups, and organizations to:

- communicate with authenticity,
- deal with difficult issues,
- bridge differences with integrity,
- relate with love and respect.

FCE's approach encourages
tolerance of ambiguity,
the experience of discovery,
and the tension between holding on
and letting go.
As we empower others,
so are we empowered
by a Spirit
within and beyond ourselves.

with a sort of slogan, but one of the phrases that kept coming up was from the gospels: "And the hidden shall become known."

The Foundation just finished a conference on business and community at the University of Chicago School of Business with some seventy-five hard headed businesspeople. The theme was "tension", and the subtheme was that, within an organization, community represents a forum where the tension can be surfaced out in the open and made known. You can't develop a "tensionless" organization. To the contrary, one of the conclusions at the conference was that you wouldn't want to develop a tensionless organization.

Creating community in the context of an organization permits those tensions to be surfaced and dealt with as best they can, rather than being latent or under the table.

Alan: *Many groups and organizations in recent years have been experimenting with community building and consensus process. For some it works beautifully - but for others, seeking consensus seems to become a morass that sucks energy out of their efforts. What's the difference between groups for whom consensus works, and those who never quite seem to get there?*

Scotty: One of the things we have to get to is a definition of consensus.

The Foundation once did a workshop for a large group medical practice that clearly had a problem with retaining its professional staff. When they called us, they said they had all agreed that they needed a community-building workshop, and that they would take two days off to do it. Now, it's not enough to go into an organization just to build community, because if you do that and leave, the whole thing collapses two days later. So when we work

with organizations, our initial intervention is at least three days. We build community in the first two, then spend a third day having the group make written, consensual decisions about what they are going to do to maintain themselves as a community.

Well, these doctors said "My god! Do you know how difficult it is for seventeen physicians to take off from their practice for two days, and you're saying we have to do it for three?" I said, "Yup!" They finally agreed.

Physicians have big egos, so they don't ordinarily work very well together. But to give you an idea of how well a group can work in community, here's the definition of consensus they developed on the third day of that workshop: "Consensus is a group decision - which some members may not feel is the best decision but which they can all live with, support, and commit themselves to not undermine - arrived at without voting, through a process whereby the issues are fully aired, all members feel that they have been adequately heard, in which everyone has equal power and responsibility, and different degrees of influence by virtue of individual stubbornness or charisma are avoided, so that all are satisfied with the process. The process requires the members to be emotionally present and engaged; frank in a loving, mutually respectful manner; sensitive to each other; to be selfless, dispassionate, and capable of emptying themselves; and possessing a paradoxical awareness of both people and time, including knowing when the solution is satisfactory, and that it is time to stop and not re-open the discussion until such time that the group determines a need for revision." [*©1988, Valley Diagnostic, Medical, and Surgical Clinic, Inc. of Harlingen, Texas and the Foundation for Community Encouragement, Knoxville, Tennessee, reprinted with permission.*]

Alan: *That's certainly comprehensive!*

Scotty: It's starting to be used by organizations around North America precisely because it is so thorough. A number of answers to your question come out of that definition. There are a lot of organizations that operate by what they *think* is consensus, but it really is not consensus at all. I've run into three top executives, for example, who have told me that they "*rule* by consensus"!

But to meet the definition's requirements, you essentially *have* to have what we call true community. And if you do not, you can come up with a kind of decision-making process that you *call* consensus, but isn't really.

Many institutions that try to get to consensus fail because they are not yet true communities. They aren't *ready* yet to get to consensus, because they need to work on *themselves* before they start to make decisions.

Alan: *Assuming a group does make it to true community and consensus, how does it stay there? What, for example, did those doctors decide to do to maintain themselves as a community?*

Scotty: Well, the doctors are a wonderful example because they did a number of things, including having a follow-up workshop and doing some work with a consultant. They radically revised their committee system to make all major decisions by consensus, and in community. They used their definition of consensus in their recruitment of new members. Over the year after our initial intervention, they grew from seventeen to twenty-five physicians.

But a year and a half later, having become fat and successful again, the crisis had passed and they gave up working on it. I now hear they are out of

community. It takes a significant amount of effort to build community, but it takes even more effort - *on-going* effort - to maintain it. The biggest problem with community maintenance, as with community start-up, is the problem of organizations simply being willing to pay the price - which is, primarily, a price of *time*.

It's also a price of ongoing vulnerability. And it is a price of being willing to continually re-examine your norms. Sometimes the price is having to *repeat* the work of community building workshops, or having consultants work with you. And the biggest opposition to paying the price is from people who, just as in individual therapy, want what the therapist would call "the magical solution." There are many organizations that would love to have community if we could give it to them as some kind of free magic. It ain't magic, and it ain't free. It's work, like anything else.

Alan: *But work with a potentially huge pay-off. A clearly focused intention seems to be key here.*

Scotty: Together with vigilance. And I don't want to be discouraging about the price - I think the price is *extra-ordinarily* cost effective.

For instance, the Foundation did a couple of workshops for two labor/management negotiating teams, for a Fortune 100 company. They had a two-month obligatory negotiating period, and they vowed to try to keep themselves in community for those two months, which they succeeded in doing.

Instead of "coming to the table," they got rid of the table. Management and labor had previously eaten separately; they ate together. Management vowed to come in with its bottom line, financially, right at the very beginning. They each vowed *not* to

try to caucus for the two months, and they succeeded.

They changed the rules, and they collaborated on a contract. Both sides were saying things like, "Hey, you guys are overlooking this thing that is to your advantage." This was the highest paid consulting contract we've had for the Foundation. We probably charged them $16,000, but they probably saved $16,000,000 for a strike that didn't happen.

Alan: *What sustains a community in the long term?*

Scotty: I'm not sure how sustainable community is unless it has a pretty clearly defined task. Healthy organizations have a mission statement, often along with a philosophy and a vision statement, which they continually update and revise. I suspect that there are a lot of intentional communities, for example, that either don't have a mission statement or haven't looked at it for years and years.

Alan: *So communities of all kinds need to say, "This is what we are going to do together."*

Scotty: And "This is our *purpose* for being together." And that statement has to be reexamined, ritualistically, every couple of years. Doing this requires that the organization's cultural values be explicit. At each of our Foundation's board meetings, not only do we have a list of our ground rules - our whole *culture* is spelled out in a big flip chart somewhere where everybody can look at it.

These values include openness, being willing to be challenged, to re-look at norms, being willing to change. There has to be love and respect, of course - but there also has to be valid data. There has to be a kind of tension between caring and a terrible dedication to reality.

Of course, there are some organizations or communities that should probably *not* be maintained or sustained. That gets into the issue of, "When has an organization outlived its usefulness?" That, again, gets into re-visiting the mission statement. "Do we still have a mission? Maybe we don't anymore."

A critical part of the art of sustaining community is integration of *task* and *process*. Task is working on your mission, and process is working on yourselves as a community. This art requires an enormous amount of practice.

> *There has to be love and respect in community - but there also has to be valid data. There has to be a kind of tension between caring and a terrible dedication to reality.*

A group of people never become a community and stay a community. They continually fall out of community, back into chaos or pseudocommunity. What characterizes a healthy, ongoing, sustained community is the rapidity with which it is able to say, "Hey, we've lost it. We need to go back and work on ourselves."

Alan: *"We need to leave off working on our task for awhile and do some work on our* process."

Scotty: Right. Switching from one to another is difficult. The timing is an art, and requires discipline.

We work by doing the community process first, and then going on to the task. One of the things that characterizes our work is that it's very gentle. But there's one exercise we do that *is not* gentle. For groups that are interested in issues of sustainability, and task versus process, we will have them work on themselves as a community for fifteen minutes. Somebody will be in the midst of talking about themselves, saying something terribly deep, and they'll be crying and heartbroken. But at 15 minutes, the leader will snap his or her fingers and say, "Now start working on your task, your mission statement."

It's amazing how good people get at this after awhile. They can be in the midst of rephrasing a policy document, and the leader can make a snap of the fingers again and say "Now go back to your process," and they can go right back to that person who was crying fifteen minutes ago, who starts crying again.

Now in reality, you want to be much more artistic than that, rather than switching by rote every fifteen minutes. But we use this rather brutal exercise just to demonstrate to groups how they *can* overcome their inertia. It shows that it is *possible* for a group of human beings to switch like that on a moment's notice.

Alan: *Suppose you want to create community in your office, or right on your block, but you don't have a workshop to go to. What do you do?*

Scotty: One of the reasons that we set up the Foundation was precisely to help those groups that are not able to do it on their own. Somewhere between twenty-five and fifty percent of the groups that read *The Different Drum* and try to develop

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community on their own are able to do it. But the other fifty to seventy-five percent can't. They just don't have the process skills, or the right combination of people. They've got to get expertise.

But sometimes the expertise they need may in fact be task, rather than process, expertise. For instance, when we started the Foundation we were a bunch of "do-gooders" who really didn't have the foggiest idea about *how* to do good. If you had asked me six years ago what strategic planning was, I would have said it was something that was only done by the Air Force, like strategic bombing. As a Board, we had to learn strategic planning and how to run a business. In some ways, that's actually *harder* than starting with a structured, task-oriented organization and trying to develop community.

If you had asked me six years ago what strategic planning was, I'd have said it was something only done by the Air Force.

Alan: *That certainly seems to have been true for many intentional communities over the years. Often it seems to have been the business, management, and structure issues that have proven to be the Achilles' heel.*

Scotty: This is something I'm quite passionate about. Structure and community are *not* incompatible. To the contrary, they mutually thrive on one another. Actually, the greater the structure in an orga-

nization, and the clearer that structure is, the easier it is for us to introduce community into the organization. If a taskoriented business group that is not well structured builds itself into community, it will discover, I think, that their very next task is to define roles. Invariably, those roles are going to be in some sort of hierarchy.

The purpose of community is not to get rid of hierarchy. Again, part of the *art* of all this is for an organization to learn how to function in a hierarchical and highly structured task-oriented mode, *and* learn how to function in a community mode. It also needs to learn the technology of switching back and forth. The more clearly defined the roles are, the more structured the organization actually is, the easier this switching back and forth becomes. The more blurred the structure, the harder it becomes.

Alan: *In* The Different Drum you *write, "An organization is able to nurture a measure of community within itself only to the extent that it is willing to risk or tolerate a certain lack of structure." Is what you're saying now a modification of that earlier view?*

Scotty: An elaboration of it. The only obstacle to building and maintaining community within an organization is not structural. It's *political.* If you get somebody at the top who is not willing to relinquish the structure, even temporarily, or who has to dominate everything, there's no way you can have community in that organization. So the people in the organization, particularly at the top, have to be willing to temporarily lay aside their role and their rank.

Alan: *You've described personal growth as a "journey out of culture". Is growth toward real community similar? Is community "a-cultural"?*

Scotty: No, it's not a-cultural. I think there is a distinct culture of community. Remember that at all of our board meetings we have, among other things, a list of about thirty values in our organizational culture. The principles of community are some of the parameters of what might be considered a new *global* culture. Those are values like respect, and using valid data. Only a very small minority of people - under 5% - can't buy into those values.

Alan: *What would "global community" look like? Is it even possible?*

Scotty: Sure it is. We have built community in every walk of life and pretty much in every culture. We did a workshop last year for Jews, Christians, and Muslims to build community. It was so successful the Muslims have donated money to help us put it on again.

But the word global gets mushy unless it is related to a real problem. For instance, I can practically guarantee you that if you took five Anglos, fifteen Afrikaners, and thirty-five Blacks from South Africa and put them together in the same room and got them to work towards committing themselves to learning this "technology of community," that at the end of three or four days you'd have them coming out respecting each other, loving each other, and able to work profoundly effectively on whatever it is that they need to work on. Community doesn't look any different wherever it is. The problem is to get the people into the room.

Alan: *And to keep them there through the four stages of pseudocommunity, chaos, emptiness - and finally com-munity.*

Scotty: Right. The only requirement we have is that people stay there and not walk out. Incidentally, another thing we've learned consistently, which I didn't know at the time I wrote *The Different Drum*, is that it's much easier to build community among unsophisticated people than among the sophisticated. A group of diplomats or psychiatrists are really tough, because you have to penetrate their sophistication to get to their innocence.

But I believe creating community is always possible, and when people see that you can attain community consistently - that there are rules and principles you can follow to get there that fosters real hope.

Alan: So *"the salvation of the world," as you refer to it in your writing, is attainable.*

Scotty: Very much so. Let me read you part of the Foundation's Philosophy Statement, which captures some of the essence of this vision: "There is a yearning in the heart for peace. Because of the wounds, the rejections, we have received in past relationships, we are frightened by the risks. In our fear we discount the dream of authentic community as merely visionary. But there are rules by which people can come back together, by which the old wounds are healed. It is the mission of the Foundation for Community Encouragement to teach these rules, to make hope real again, to make the vision actually manifest in a world which has almost forgotten the glory of what it means to be human."

Being in community in an organization isn't a panacea. Reality still exists. And as is characteristic of a healthy individual life, there's actually more pain *in* community than outside of it. But there's also more *joy*. To me, what characterizes a true commu-

nity is not that it's less painful, but that it's more *alive*.

Scott Peck, psychiatrist, community organizer

PORTRAIT OF A POLITICAL INSTIGATOR

A forty-year veteran in the struggle to introduce positive change believes the time has come to move "beyond democracy"

an Interview with Robert Theobald, by Alan AtKisson

What lies "beyond democracy"? According to Robert Theobald - an economist and instigator who has been involved in fundamental change issues for four decades as a writer, speaker and consultant - it is the complete abandonment of power as a political means, no matter what the ends. This is certainly a radical idea; but then again, Theobald has made a career of being a decade or two ahead of his time. We're grateful to him for suggesting the theme of this issue and acting as an editorial advisor on its contents.

One of Robert's quirks is that his writing is done collaboratively. He's offering a special package for readers of IN CONTEXT interested in collaborating with him: For $25, he will send you his last book, The Rapids of Change, *and his forthcoming volume* Turning the Century *(in draft). Your feedback on the draft, which includes more material on his political ideas, will affect the final draft. Write to him at 330 Morgan Street, New Orleans, LA 70114. He'd also appreciate feedback on any of the ideas in this interview.*

Alan: *According to the Kettering Foundation report on "Citizens and Politics," Americans no longer believe that they can have an effect on the political process, and feel as though they have been dealt out of the game. These findings support your contention that*

we are experiencing a breakdown in "decision-making structures." What does that breakdown consist of?

Robert: What's really happened to us is that we have decided - as a culture - that consumption is more important than politics. Willis Harmon said it well when he remarked that if his grandmother had been asked if she were a "consumer," she would have thrown a skillet at the interviewer. But we contemporary Americans have chosen or been forced - it's a bit of both - to put our time and energy into consumption, and as a result the very tricky balance between the citizen and the decision-maker has gone out of the window. We now have a culture in which the decision-maker is perpetually seen as being on the take.

Meanwhile, the politicians feel that nobody is willing to support them. Once, at a meeting in Washington with some members of the House and Senate, someone commented to me, "Bob, I wish I could believe you when you tell me that there are people interested in the ideas you put forward, but I never hear from them." Politicians mostly hear variations on the theme of "not in my backyard." They hardly ever hear from the people who are thinking more broadly.

My biggest concern lately is about the lack of *courage* in our political system. Sometimes we must be willing to say, "Look, on this subject, I *know*." That's not the style for all issues at all times, but I think we disempower ourselves by saying that participation is *always* better than empowering a decision-maker. I think more people in politics need to follow the example of Martin Luther and say, "Here I stand, I can do no other." You may not get anywhere, but you have to try.

Put all those elements together and you have an extraordinarily murky brew. A number of my

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friends talk about the need for *glasnost* and *perestroika* here in the US - which is tragic, because we supposedly live in a democracy. But it also makes sense, because in many ways our culture is as dysfunctional as the Soviet Union's.

Alan: Is *that kind of large-scale "reformation" since Luther has been invoked - really possible in the United States?*

Robert: Well, anybody who is not convinced that the whole system can suddenly slip into a different shape is not looking far enough ahead. If enough people decide that they are not willing to live with the structures we have, and decide to use the freedom that does exist in our culture to change them, a system shift might occur extremely rapidly.

I think our system may be a lot closer to that than any of us are willing to accept. There are so many fissures - so many places where it's unstable. Mayors are saying that the cities are not working. Our economic system is vulnerable to breakdown. Millions of people are saying, "This isn't the right way to do it."

As I look back at the Gulf War, for example, the most remarkable thing to me is that while the approval ratings were supposedly as high as 90% at certain stages, most people I know were wondering, "Where are all these people who are supposedly in favor of the war?" A friend in Minnesota reported that she talked with Republican women, very high in the party, who were saying exactly the same thing. "I cannot find the people who are in favor of the war," she told me.

I think there was a very significant opinion group that wasn't following traditional patterns. It wasn't right or left, it wasn't necessarily antiwar. It

was a group of people who said, "This is stupid." Such people need to mobilize themselves.

Alan: *You've alluded in our previous conversations to "the hard issues we're not facing." What are some of these political issues that aren't on the table as clearly as they need to be?*

Robert: Let's start with education, because that's what the president is now pushing. He has trivialized the issue by saying that we *know* how to educate and that all we have to do is do it better. But as I go around the country and talk to education audiences, people tell me that the goals of education are all wrong. Now, if the *goals* of schooling are wrong, the school *system* is going to be terrible. We're allowing the inertia of a system that most people know to be wrongly directed to continue to drive us.

The *real* goals of our current education system are to bring people up to take orders, to sort into positions of superiority and inferiority, to believe that the information (not knowledge) they get in school will be relevant over their lifespan, and to believe that education stops when they're eighteen or twenty-two. That's all got to change.

A second issue is health. We clearly cannot pay for all the health care that's feasible, given modern medical technology and its costs. The fact is, we are going to have to *ration* medical care. Indeed, we already do: we look after the poor, the rich, and those with health insurance - and we leave out the 35 million people who *don't* have health insurance. So the real question we face is *how* to ration - what *principles* to use. Nobody wants to talk about that issue, and I'm not surprised.

***Alan**: There is the exception of the "Oregon Plan," which sticks the nation's first toe in the water on the question of medical rationing.*

> Anybody who is not convinced that the whole system can suddenly slip into a different shape is not looking far enough ahead.

Robert: And Oregon keeps getting in trouble with the federal government every time they try to implement it. But in general, I do believe that more of the interesting decision-making ideas - politics, after all, is only a way to talk about how you make collective decisions - are coming out of the Northwest. That's one place to watch.

Another hard issue is the justice system. We don't really have a justice system - we have something that creeps and crawls. It only survives because of plea bargaining, and because we throw people *out* of prison early to alleviate overcrowding. And we *still* have a larger percentage of our population in prison than any other democratic country.

I've seen figures that as much as 75% of the crime in this country is drug-related. Mine may be an unpopular stance, but I believe that so long as we continue to have a prohibition on drugs - which to me, as an economist, means *guaranteeing* profits to everyone in the drug trade - nothing will improve. I cannot understand why we are incapable of at least launching a debate to consider the relationship between the failure of alcohol prohibition of the twenties and thirties and drug prohibition today. We are training a huge generation of people into criminal behavior. The alcohol prohibition created criminal institutions that have carried through to the present era. Now we are creating an international drug mafia,

and when we eventually become intelligent, this mafia will be looking for something else to do.

Those are three issues. I could go on. The point is, what goes on in Congress is basically around the borders of real issues or about even more trivial matters, such as flag-burning. In a nutshell, we spend our political time and energy on issues that are marginal.

Alan: *You've been prodding at the American political system in this way for a long time now. What change has there been in how your message is received?*

Robert: What's startling to me is that when I started talking about ideas like these 30 years ago, they were so new and strange that people looked at me as if I had two heads. In retrospect, I think I was looked on as something of a cultural clown - a "crazy" who was fun to listen to. The reaction I get now worries me a lot more, because what most people say is "Bob, today you're right, but we're not going to do anything about it."

When speaking I often use something I call the "Titanic Quiz." I ask audiences - many of them very mainstream groups how much change the culture needs and wants, on a scale of 1 to 10. Lately they're all up in the 6 to 9 range. People know we need change, but none of us seem to be able to get our act together to find out how it can be done. If this were the 1850s, we would create a new political party. This was done very successfully - it took less than a decade for the new party to win a Presidential election. But while I do look for the creation of a new third party, I don't think that's where we're going to get the real shifts we require - because what we need this time is to change people's *individual thinking* rather than to force change by power.

Alan: *And over the years you have been an enormously influential instigator for such individual change. What are some of the most effective strategies you've used, and what lessons have you learned from the efforts that didn't take off?*

Robert: There's no easy answer for that, because one of my basic philosophical beliefs is that "Everything I do is critically important, but nothing I do matters a hill of beans." Both are true for all of us - if I believe only that what Bob Theobald does is going to change the world, I become an arrogant bastard. If on the other hand I believe that nothing I do matters a hill of beans, I cease to achieve anything. It's a question of balance.

Looking back on my career, one of the efforts that seems most successful was creating a document called *The Triple Revolution* in 1964. It basically said that we are moving out of one period of history and into another - and in 1964 that was an extraordinarily new idea. It also came at the right moment. People heard it. The rhetoric it introduced - the idea of a change in eras from hunting and gathering, to agriculture and industry, to something new - has stayed around and, I think, been very helpful.

In a sense, that was a humbling experience, because it was the right document at the right time - and it wasn't even an especially *good* document. It just proved that timing is everything.

Another thing I was associated with - which has also changed our thinking - was an idea called "basic economic security." This came to be known as "guaranteed income" and was almost adopted by Nixon as part of the Family Assistance Plan. I don't usually get public credit for this - Milton Friedman usually does - but actually, if I hadn't pushed it, it might not have happened.

Why did that idea fly, despite many people's doubts? Because people were in fact already *getting* guaranteed incomes. We weren't about to let anybody starve in the US - or if we did, it was by mistake. But they weren't getting that income very efficiently because of an incredible bureaucratic mess. Providing assistance would have been done more simply and more cheaply by a far simpler scheme.

Then in 1984 several of us, including Robert Gilman [*IN CONTEXT* founding editor], did a 20-year follow-up to *The Triple Revolution* called *At the Crossroads*. We sold 100,000 copies - it wasn't as successful as I had hoped. We tried to repeat an old model and that rarely works.

Now, I have made one big mistake all through my life, and that is that I have underestimated the inertia of the culture. I have assumed, incorrectly, that people can see their self-interest and will therefore change.

That brings me to another piece of my diagnosis: the real battle of the 1990s is between fundamentalism - people getting into a hole and pulling the covers over themselves as they get frightened - and our ability to come up with new models and ideas that people can grasp and manage. *Much of my recent work has been around what we can do in community - because that is where people can move. What can you do in your workplace? What can you do in your church, school, or college? What can you do as a consumer?* [Italics mine - ed.]

We have *enormous* power as consumers. Our purchasing decisions have driven the development of diet foods and lighter alcohol, for example. In similar fashion, it's important that people buy the right *information* sources. Why do all the people who want change still buy *Time* and *Newsweek* and not *IN CONTEXT*? Please leave that in - rather than edit it out because that's a plug.

The other thing you can do is to be less of a consumer. As people at the New Road Map Foundation have foreseen, thrift is becoming a big thing [see IC #26, "What Is Enough?"]. Growth-supporters say we've got to buy more and push the economy harder so we don't have a recession - but thrift will allow us to spend less time at our jobs and more time on our own purposes. We *can* get off what someone once described as a "whirling dervish economy" that's dependent on compulsive consumption.

Alan: *What are some of the most exciting things you've been involved in recently?*

Robert: *One project was in The Riverbend, a community in Illinois just across the river from St. Louis that wanted to revive itself. It started with a large public gathering, out of which 300 people came together in groups to work on new directions for the community. From my perspective it was a much more effective leadership effort than most of the things we call "leadership programs," because it put people into positions where they had to think and do something about what they wanted for the community. I think leadership happens through doing.*

The remarkable thing about this program was that the existing leadership of the community was totally willing to allow these groups to do what they thought was important. [Italics mine - ed.]

I don't want to overstate what we achieved - that's always dangerous - but we did have an impact. We created 300 new leaders, all of whom will *do* something.

The primary change came about as people did the best they could by working *with* people rather than against them. That's part of what's wrong with our democracy at the moment - we are caught in an election process that focuses on "I have to beat the

other guy rather than "I have to care about the community."

> Intellectuals assume a connection between policy and action, but people with street smarts aren't stupid enough to make that mistake.

Alan: You *also helped the Alaska Round Tables get going, didn't you? What's the story there?*

Robert: *The idea behind the Round Tables is that in every community there are people who would like to meet creatively to think about where the community ought to be going.* [Italics mine - ed.] I helped start the Wednesday Round Table in Anchorage.

People meet for an hour and a half, anybody can come, and they just talk about the future of the city of Anchorage. The same model has spread to Fairbanks and Juneau. Round Tables are groups of people who are willing to work with each other, and it's a place for creative thought - which is in very short supply these days.

But the weakness in such processes, and this has taken me some time to realize, is that unless creative talk is combined with action steps you end up with an enormous amount of discussion that doesn't go anywhere. There needs to be a combination of the trust-building and creativity in a process like the Round Table, but people also need to take on some project. Of course, anyone with street smarts knows that. These days I would rather work

with people who have street smarts than with intellectuals. Intellectuals assume a connection between policy and action, but people with street smarts aren't stupid enough to make that mistake.

Alan: *What are you passionate about at the moment?*

Robert: *I want to help people understand that they are not alone in their drive toward a more compassionate society. I want to enable institutions and communities so they learn to trust and understand their interdependence. I want to encourage creativity. And I want to demonstrate the new action styles which are effective now that top-down leadership is being abandoned.*

> The problem with democracy is that it has simply taken the power of the king and moved it into the power of a congress or parliament. It is still a power system.

I am now developing processes which should enable institutions and communities to make progress at far lower costs in energy and resources than often occurs at the present time. I'm looking for people and groups who want to achieve these goals, and I would like to help them become effective. [Italics mine - ed.]

Alan: *You've mentioned to me before the need to get "beyond democracy." What do you mean by that? What lies beyond democracy?*

Robert: I've been hinting at this issue throughout our conversation. The problem with democracy is that it has simply taken the power of the king and moved it into the power of a congress or parliament. It is still a power system - it gives a majority the right to force a minority to behave in a certain way. It rests on an assumption that there is one right answer, and that as soon as you have 50% of the population lined up behind it, you can impose it on other people. It places an emphasis on law instead of on education.

Current democracy also depends very much on a balance of powers, all struggling against each other. This is problematic when the culture becoming increasingly fragmented into Blacks, the Whites, the gays, the feminists, Jews, the Hispanics and the Asians, and many other groups who all say they are being oppressed.

Alan: *It's the American equivalent of Balkanization.*

Robert: Right, not geographic, but very terrifying. You end up with a culture where *everybody* is fighting each other for their slice of the pie. Unless we can create a system for working with each other to look for the best policies, we can't survive. It was all right to fight each other when we had a trivial impact on the outside world, or at least a geographically limited one. When you have unlimited destruction and productive power, and when human beings are indeed as god then the only hope we have is to work as we with each other as possible.

Now, I'm not arguing that there shouldn't be conflict. Conflict is inevitable. But when you get into a conflict situation, there are two types of responses. You can either say, "That is the most stupid idea I have ever heard in my life, it isn't tolerable, and I

will fight you about it." Or you can say, "Hmm. That's a very different way of looking at things. Maybe if we combine your idea and my idea we'll get somewhere.

Take an issue like abortion. I think there is a very simple way out of it. We should aim to make sure that no child is conceived who isn't wanted. That's an ideal about which a large number people could agree, instead of fighting about whether somebody should have the right to a abortion or not. Neither stance in the current debate is very attractive. I don't think there are many people besides a few extremists who really believe in the rhetoric - but they believe they have to win the battle between pro-choice and pro-life.

Alan: *And of course, the technology is shifting, which may soon make abortion an obsolete technology and change the nature of the battle.*

Robert: Yes, but we are very capable of continuing battles which have long since been won. We need to help people decide when they should have sexual relations, how they should manage them, and whether there should be kids.

So I believe we have no choice but to move beyond democracy. What my work is about, really, is the end of power. Many people say everybody wants power - yet I don't sense that to be true. I see in people a real desire for a different way of living which doesn't force them to be superior *or* inferior to other people. If we had unlimited time, I have no doubt that we'd get into this new state. The question is whether we could do it in the time period we have, given situations like that in Yugoslavia and our own cultural fragmentation.

People who say democracy is the end of the process, as in "the end of history," have completely missed the point. Democracy was a way of control-

ling power so it was not used as dangerously and as destructively as it used to be by dictators and kings. Now, it is *power itself* that has to be abandoned.

Alan: *The title of your previous book,* The Rapids of Change, *seems to have captured in a phrase the feeling of contemporary life. Given the continuing acceleration of change since that book was published in 1988, what "P.S." would you add to it now?*

Robert: I would say much more clearly than *Rapids* says that unless the change process is balanced by some fixed and stable points - by habits, by icons, by having lunch together every Sunday - everything becomes impossible. There must be some things you *don't* have to talk about, some cultural pieces that remain untouched. Anybody who attacks the flag, for example, isn't helping anything. One must think very clearly: does this change achieve anything good?

Long ago my wife said, "We may need to have new standards of beauty and order and new values by which we live our lives, but until we do we had better preserve the ones we've got." In the 1960s I ran around saying, "You need to hit the mule (i.e., society) on the head with a two-by-four to get his attention." But now the mule is hyperactive, and hitting it on the head with a two-by-four isn't sensible. You need to feed it hay at a regular time every morning.

Alan: If *you were advising a political candidate now, what would be the most important advice you'd want to give that person?*

Robert: I believe there is an enormous hidden vote for guts, for honesty, for compassion, for caring. I'm not talking about the traditional liberal agenda - I'm talking about the need to deal with the problems

that are destroying the heart of our society. I would tell a candidate, "Don't trim your sails every time a new poll comes in. Stand for something. If you can't run on a platform you really believe in, don't run at all."

These two splendid interviews reprinted from *In Context* - a *Quarterly of Humane, Sustainable Culture, Nos. 29 & 30.* You may subscribe to this magnificent periodical by writing *In Context*, P.O. Box 11470, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110. Send $18, and make the check payable to CONTEXT INSTITUTE.

And - just in case you missed the information given at the beginning of this article as to how you may obtain a copy of *The Rapids of Change* or Robert's new book, *Turning the Century*, it's there! Go back and look. And I promise you, he really will take your suggestions seriously if you write him! Mine were a part of *Rapids!*

A Nobel laureate asks graduates — and the rest of us — to think about what education really means

HAVE YOU LEARNED THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON OF ALL?

by Elie Wiesel

Elie Wiesel, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986, is currently Professor in the Humanities at Boston University. A native of Transylvania, he was captured by the Nazis at 15 and imprisoned in the Auschwitz and Buchenwald concentration camps, where nearly all his family died. He is the author of some 30 books, including "Night" and his newest, "The Forgotten." Speaking as an American citizen, a writer, a teacher and a witness to history, Wiesel has an urgent message for the graduates who will be entering the world in these uncertain times.

FIRST, I WOULD LIKE TO congratulate you. For you and your parents, the day of your graduation should be marked by joy and celebration. Your years of study and work have brought triumph, which rewards you, honors your teachers and brings pride to your families.

And now you are ready to say farewell to your classmates and face both the privileges and obligations society will feel entitled to place upon you.

How will you cope with them?

May I share with you one of the principles that governs my life? It is the realization that what I receive I must pass on to others. The knowledge that I have acquired must not remain imprisoned in my brain. I owe it to many men and women to do

something with it. I feel the need to pay back what was given to me. Call it gratitude.

Isn't this what education is all about?

There is divine beauty in learning, just as there is human beauty in tolerance. To learn means to accept the postulate that life did not begin at my birth. Others have been here before me, and I walk in their footsteps. The books I have read were composed by generations of fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, teachers and disciples. I am the sum total of their experiences, their quests. And so are you.

You and I believe that knowledge belongs to every-body, irrespective of race, color or creed. Plato does not address himself to one ethnic group alone, nor does Shakespeare appeal to one religion only. The teachings of Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. do not apply just to Indians or African-Americans. Like cognitive science, theoretical physics or algebra, the creations and philosophical ideas of the ages are part of our collective heritage and human memory. We all learn from the same masters.

In other words, education must, almost by definition, bring people together, bring generations together. Education has another consequence. My young friends, I feel it is my moral duty to warn you against an evil that could jeopardize this generation's extraordinary possibilities. That evil is fanaticism. True education negates fanaticism.

Literature and fanaticism do not go together. Culture and fanaticism are forever irreconcilable. The fanatic is always against culture, because culture means freedom of spirit and imagination, and the fanatic fears someone else's imagination. In fact, the fanatic who wishes to inspire fear is ultimately doomed to live in fear, always. Fear of the stranger, fear of the other, fear of the other inside him or her.

Fanaticism has many faces: racism, religious bigotry, ethnic hatred. What those faces have in common is an urge to replace words with violence, facts with propaganda, reason with blind impulses, hope with terror.

For a while we might have believed that fanaticism was on its decline. It is not. Quite the contrary, it is on the rise in our cities, in our country and in our world.

In Western Europe — in Germany and France, Belgium and Austria — we are seeing a resurgence of yesterday's demons of fascism and intolerance. In Eastern Europe, ethnic factions are rekindling old conflicts. In the Middle East, deeply held hatreds seem ever on the verge of sparking more raging conflagrations. "It's us against them" has been taken as an essential truth. Strangers are being greeted with animosity almost everywhere.

Let us look at our own country. As this last decade of a century, which is also the last decade of a millennium, runs to its dazzling dénouement, we seem ever more divided. Can't all our citizens — white Americans and African Americans, Hispanics and Asians, Jews and Christians, Jews and Moslems, young and old — live together, work together and face together their common challenges? Must they — must we — constantly subject ourselves to useless social tensions and dangerous ideological conflicts that could turn joy into dust and creation into ashes?

We face many difficulties and must find answers to thorny questions if our nation is to flourish: What has happened to our economy? What went wrong with elementary and secondary education? Why are so many youngsters seduced by crime? By drugs? By hate? Why is there so much bloodshed in so many quarters?

The answers to these questions do not lie with the clichés, senseless stereotypes and absurd

accusations that are being used to justify religious or ethnic hatred. Evil forces are at work — some, to my embarrassment, unleashed by my fellow teachers — and something must be done to heal the effect of their poisonous theories.

In the New York City neighborhood of Crown Heights last year, a black child was killed when a car driven by a Hasidic Jew went out of control and jumped the curb. Already strained tensions between the black and Hasidic communities exploded. A young Hasidic man was killed, and a black man was arrested for the murder. For days and weeks the streets were filled with scenes of violence and hatred. The incidents left deep scars.

We must ask ourselves if we, as a nation, want to be reduced to addressing our problems with violent actions. Will we allow street wars at home to succeed armed conflicts abroad?

As a Jew, I have witnessed the consequences of anti-Semitism which is one of the oldest group-prejudices in history. We Jews have been accused of many sins. Now we are perceived as the group that wields more power than any other. I have heard good people say this — decent people, intelligent people. Don't they know that not all Jews have power? That not all those who have power are Jewish? Haven't they ever heard of poor Jews who are unable to make ends meet? Who live on welfare?

African-Americans have been subjected to centuries of racism. Today some blame the victims for the problems of our country. Don't they know that most African Americans are hardworking, good citizens? That the tragedy that occurred in Los Angeles, born of injustice, is just that, a tragedy? That important parts of American culture — from music to language to literature to fashion —have been created by African Americans?

I insist: *All* collective judgments are wrong. Only racists make them. And racism is stupid, just as it is ugly. Its aim is to destroy, to pervert, to distort innocence in human beings and their quest for human equality.

Racism is misleading. There are good people and bad people in every community. No human race is superior; no religious faith is inferior. We all come from somewhere, and we all wonder where we are going.

I know: You have been tested during your years in school, more than once. But the real tests are still ahead of you. How will you deal with your own or other people's hunger, homelessness, sexual or gender discrimination, and community antagonisms?

The world outside is not waiting to welcome you with open arms. The economic climate is bad; the psychological one is worse. You wonder, will you find jobs? Allies? Friends? I pray to our Father in heaven to answer "yes" to all these questions.

But should you encounter temporary disappointments, I also pray: Do not make someone else pay the price for your pain. Do not see in someone else a scapegoat for your difficulties. Only a fanatic does that — not you, for you have learned to reject fanaticism. You know that fanaticism leads to hatred, and hatred is both destructive and self-destructive.

I speak to you as a teacher and a student — one is both, always. I also speak to you as a witness. I speak to you, for I do not want my past to become your future.

• PARADE MAGAZINE • MAY 24, 1992 •

Here is a poignantly inclusive visionary account of the kind of community we might create together.

VISION OF COMMUNITY (Take 1)
by Alan Klein

My vision of community would be to develop a holistic, organic focus to stimulate awareness and expanded consciousness based on the simplicity and continuity of living from and with the land, of re-establishing an intimate relationship, with one another, and with all living things. And, in this process, to dissolve our barriers of separation.

Some common spiritual practice, including daily meditation practice, retreats, celebrations and ceremonies would provide a strong and necessary basis for community.

I see the community as aiming towards self-sufficiency in foodstuffs. In addition to agriculture, there can be shops for woodworking, pottery and whatever crafts people would like to undertake.

The size of the community, optimally, would be (or become) large enough to assure an inventory of necessary skills (and the opportunity for others to become proficient, rotate work, etc.), and small enough to maintain feelings of bond, sharing and common purpose/destiny (i.e., to *live* together).

There would be buildings (structures) for community activities: meditations, group meals, classes, celebrations, performances, etc., and individual structures for families and others.

Participation in plays, dance, music, healing ceremonies and other activities and rituals will help us to reintegrate and widen the frontiers of consciousness, increase vitality and the zest for life.

Education (of children) will occur within the community and as an organic - and respectful - re-

sponse to curiosity and wonder, with attention paid to education of the heart, as Gandhi put it. All of us, smaller and larger, would be encouraged to study in this way, learning, among other things, how to replace coercion with compassion.

Non-violence is presumed, but non-coercion would also be our practice, our active study. Essential decisions would be consensual, or subject to consensual confirmation. The rights,, dignity and participation of children would be as paramount as those of adults. A tribal, or group approach to parenting, i.e., guiding and caring for, would give the children a solid sense of belonging and help eliminate the distortions usually inherent in the nuclear family.

Relations with a nearby town (and exchanges perhaps with other communities), will help prevent isolation. A sense of openness, to whatever extent possible, will encourage others to observe and learn from. I would like to see opportunities for visits from people of other countries and places, and a few openings for children and young people living in oppressing and stifling circumstances. Lastly, I would like the presence of all the generations, making a microcosm of the human community and providing the sense of continuity.

To live without a vision, without a sense of grandeur, without the hope of opening into the light (however dim and at times forgotten such hope may be), without experiencing the awe-filled flashes of the All, is not to live at all; is, I believe, to be dead on one's feet.

I see living in community, as an act not just for ourselves but for the world; the most elemental and, simultaneously, the most political, thorough going and radical statement we can make with our lives - a conscious effort to head towards a new world predicated on balance, simplicity, joy and care. I see

community - the land and ourselves - as a process where we can discharge the psychical and physical toxins which we have ingested from a sick society over the years (along with the air we breathe), reclaim our true and open natures (as rivers have been reclaimed), and build a new life for ourselves and our children, where we become in the fullest sense caretakers.

Alan Klein, a free-lance writer, knows whereof he speaks, having spent time in a number of communities including Tassajara, (a Zen community in California), The Abode of the Message in New Lebanon, New York (the Sufi community of the west), and The Free School community in Albany. He left behind him this powerful testimonial piece written in 1985 before he joined our community, when he was a member of a communitarian group in Brattleboro, Vermont.

Alan now lives in Santa Barbara, California, where he drives cab, gives massages and free-lances for the local newspaper. We miss him. Does it make it better or worse for us that he understands community so deeply? We've not yet quite decided - but what is startling, reading this piece some six years after it was written, is how closely Alan's vision resembles both Peck's and our own vision of community - and its emergent reality!

LETTERS:

COMMUNITY AS SCHOOL/SCHOOL AS COMMUNITY:

Sometimes the categories of school as community and community as school become so enmeshed that it is difficult to disentangle them! The following letter was recently written by my son Mark and his wife Helene to the local village school (called, in the New England village tradition, an "academy") in the small community of Ashfield, Massachusetts, where they live. The reason will be evident from its contents. So far, they have been told that this arrangement would be too difficult for any teacher to administer, and have been offered the alternative of Ian's being allowed to leave school one-half hour early.

Your editor felt that the suggested approach to schooling put forward by Ian's parents both fitted their son's needs and pointed up the anti-child bureaucratic attitude of the public school - and perhaps of most of them. We have recently heard of two cases where homeschooling parents have been brought into court and threatened with loss of their child. John Gatto tells us he appeared recently for a family in Stroudsburg, PA, and one of our community parents who is a lawyer is helping a parent in Eastham, Massachusetts, on Cape Cod. I am sure there are many more families in trouble elsewhere in the United States.

Dear Sanderson Staff,

We are writing this letter to clarify the reasons we want our son, Ian, to be in school half days, and home half days, next fall. We appreciate your taking the time to consider this plan, and Ian's needs.

We acknowledge that this may seem, at first, not to fit easily in your program, but feel that when you understand our intention, you will agree that it is a sensible approach. Our approach is somewhat

unique, but not without precedent locally and elsewhere.

This has been, by all standards, a very successful year at Sanderson for Ian. Ian thrives in the classroom atmosphere as a member of a peer group. The group of children that he has been with include several he has had close relationships with since infancy. His teachers have become important role models and mentors. We also feel that the independence from us that he gains by participating in the school has a positive impact on his social-emotional growth. We appreciate that he is exposed to many new ideas and materials that he might otherwise not have access to at home.

He has done so well at school, in large part, because he is only there for half of the day. Home education suits his learning style perfectly. The opportunity for him to pursue his interests in a largely self-motivated manner has allowed his intellectual development to flourish. His obvious enjoyment of the most detailed academic material has never ceased to amaze us. This has only been possible with the type of one-on-one attention available in the home setting. He has learned best by choosing the time, duration, subject, and method of learning. The constraints of the classroom structure by and large cannot allow this to happen to the extent that it is possible at home.

What follows is a list of some of the activities Ian has been pursuing this year. Since it is our intention to continue in a similar manner next year this should give you an idea of what his home education component may include.

Reading and Writing: Ian reads books to himself and to others. He has a steady correspondence with his aunt and also one with his grandparents. He both writes letters to them and reads their responses. He also writes thank-you cards and other

letters when appropriate. Ian regularly visits an infant and then writes about his visits in 'Caroline's Journal". He is also read aloud to both from picture books and chapter books every day. And the world is full of writing and reading experiences (lists to be written, board game rules to be read, street signs to understand, etc.)

Mathematics: Ian asked a friend of his grandmother (who is an elementary school principal) to send him math workbooks. Ian regularly works in these. Ian also does my billing at the end of each week. When we cook and bake, Ian practices doubling and halving recipes. In addition the world is full of math challenges (We have 24 buns and 6 people; how many can we each have? - How many minutes until it is time to go out? - Let's count by twos to pass time driving somewhere. Etc.)

Science: We do a lot of science experiments and a lot of explaining questions. We visited the Planetarium in Amherst and Ian is now initiating a relationship with a local person with his own observatory. Ian plays outdoors a lot and is constantly learning about creatures, the seasons, how things grow, life cycles, weather, etc.

Social Studies: Ian has a world map on his wall which he enjoys looking at and asking questions about. He also has a personal curiosity in Japan, as his grandparents live there and he will be visiting this summer. Ian also enjoys working with a compass, knowing the directions as they relate to where he happens to be at a particular time, and being able to read maps. He enjoys playing a computer game called "Oregon Trail," which is based on the westward treks.

Music: Ian enjoys listening to a variety of music styles and going to live performances. He also studies piano with Penny Schultz. In addition he is surrounded by music, as we sing, Mark makes in-

struments and plays a variety of them, and many of the adults in his life sing with or to him and expose him to the instruments they play.

Art: We work with a variety of art materials. We make both adult-directed and child-directed projects. Ian also has free access to art materials and often explores artistically. In addition, we take trips to the local art museums. Ian also works in his father's woodshop.

Physical Education: Ian enjoys swimming and we are joining the YMCA so that he can continue to swim in the winter. Ian is a very physical boy with free access to the outdoors and a very rural environment. His days are full of climbing, running, doing firewood chores, gardening, and other outdoor physical activities.

Foreign Language: Ian loves studying Hebrew. He is beginning to read and write Hebrew and has a growing vocabulary of words. He also sings a number of Hebrew songs. Ian also enjoys American Sign Language and frequently asks knowledgeable adults to teach him new signs or studies his sign language book for additional signs.

Television: Ian watches between 1/2 and 2 hours a week of parent screened videos, Reading Rainbow, Mr. Rogers, literature tapes from the library, Hebrew, Sesame Street). He does not watch Saturday morning cartoons, commercial TV, or anything age inappropriate. He is happy with this and rarely even requests more.

Computer: We have a Macintosh Computer and Ian often works on the computer writing letters, playing math games, or doing graphic programs.

Socialization: Because our home is licensed for Home Daycare there are often other children of a variety of ages for Ian to play with.

As parents we believe that we are responsible for, and have a basic right to direct, our son's educa-

tion. This has been a successful approach in the past, especially since Ian is such an intelligent and academically gifted child. It has also been successful, since he has accessible parents who love teaching and are experienced teachers. Helene is a licensed teacher and Mark has been involved in alternative education for many years. Whatever the arrangement for next year, we expect to be held fully accountable for Ian's academic progress.

It is our intention to send Ian to school for part of the day and to have him learning at home part of the day.

Our preferred schedule is to have Ian at school in the mornings. The morning seems like a good time to us because the Whole Language Approach as it is applied at Sanderson strikes us as a very exciting program with a lot of opportunities for personal and academic growth. In addition, despite the fact that the program is an integrated day program, there does seem to be a natural break between mornings and afternoons.

In order to maximize the continuity of his education it is our intent to work closely with the school and to remain flexible in implementing this program and to support the school with work at home. We intend to read the same read aloud books, work with similar Unit topics at home and allow Ian to stay in school for special projects or other such special times when appropriate. We look forward to having a relationship with Ian's teacher and would like to discuss ways we can support the class's work as it pertains to the rest of the students as well as Ian.

Ian is an active boy. He has many varied interests. We enjoy working with him and giving him the information and opportunities to learn. He is lucky in that both of his parents work at home and have chosen to be accessible to him. Mark is a luthier [maker of musical stringed instruments] and has his

shop on our property. Ian is welcome in the shop and often stops in to help assemble guitars, ask his father questions, or create woodworking projects of his own.

Helene is a childcare provider and Ian spends a large part of the day at home with her playing games, doing art projects, listening to stories, playing with the other children, writing, reading, singing and doing math, among many other activities. By having this flexibility in his life, Ian is living in the heart of his family, having time to learn to choose his activities, having the opportunity to play and explore outside, and just plain learn through living.

He also gets an awful lot from going to school. He gets the opportunity to see friends he has had since infancy, he learns how to flourish outside of the family, he meets new friends, he is exposed to new ideas, and he gets to participate in the school community and collaborate and learn from a consistent group of peers on a regular basis. To ask Ian to go to school all day or to be homeschooled all day is asking him to give up too much. It would be a shame if he were not allowed to participate in Sanderson's program.

Yours sincerely,
Mark & Helene Leue

cc Sanderson Academy principal and teachers:
Bruce Willard
Ann Marie Mislak
Laurel Dickey
Katherine First
Karen Pederson
Valerie Abramson
Barbara Kendzior
Sanderson School Committee

Proud Editor's note: Both Mark and Helene attended alternative schools as students, Mark being the first student at The Free School - and Helene taught with us for several years. Their son Ian is six.

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April 28, 1992

Mary Leue
SKOLE
72 Philip Street
Albany, NY 12202

Dear Mary,

Challenging the Giant is a very impressive achievement - congratulations on that epic volume! I've been reading various articles when I could find the time, and have been enjoying it thoroughly. We'll be plugging it for you in *Home Education Magazine* and in *Alternatives in Education*, and hope that you sell hundreds of thousands of copies and do a sequel to it soon!

Alternatives progresses slowly. We've been beset by family medical problems for the past three months: Mark's father had a paralyzing stroke, my father had a major heart attack, and Mark and I have been dividing ourselves between work here and trips to Michigan and Alaska to help out our respective mothers (he's in Michigan right now, and it's sounding pretty bad).

I finally checked our subscription listing and see that you haven't been getting our magazine - at least not through the usual channels. I thought that you had a complimentary media sub - at any rate, you do now, and I've enclosed our current back issues. Feel free to reprint anything that strikes your fancy, we don't get too excited about people reprinting from our magazine, as we figure that information

should be shared, not hoarded. We always like to see a "reprinted with permission from *Home Education Magazine*," and the writer's byline, and in some cases where an article was published with an individual copyright notice it's a good idea to clear reprinting with the original author. And if you're interested and can use it, we regularly get requests to copy and send stuff we've printed to people, and we always send it on disk at no charge, saves re-inputting articles, which is rarely any fun (we've been shopping for a scanner). We generally use "Word" and "Ready-Set-Go" on our Macintosh computers.

The Winter issue of SKOLE arrived (I just cannot get my keyboard to make that up-sidedown V - the closest I can come to it is Å), and as usual it's chock full of great stuff! Along with *GWS*, Jerry's *AEROgramme* and ALLPIE's *Options in Learning* it's one of the only educational publications I have much faith left in. The *NCACS News* is usually pretty good, too, but I haven't found much to sink my teeth into in *Holistic Education Review*. Maybe it's their professional experts attitude that leaves me cold. Just schoolteachers with a twist (holism), and nothing really new or different about their ideas of how to institutionalize children. In fact, I sense a real danger in their willingness to make the institutionalization of children much more palatable with their warm cuddly politically correct approach to education.

I have the same problem with that new outfit, GATE. They're a very well-meaning bunch, but you know what the road to hell's paved with, don't you? Reading their publications and press releases I still get the feeling that most of them view children through rather traditionally-colored glasses: as somewhat incapable little critters who would be lost without their beneficent guidance. My parents and my own five kids have taught me that such an

attitude is simply condescending hogwash, no matter the fancy wrappings. I know, I know, homeschooling's not for everyone, but neither is compulsory indoctrination. Why can't we just learn to trust children, and parents, and leave off this noble do-gooding we call education?

My patience seems to be getting thinner than it used to be. I used to have a reputation for tolerance and acceptance, but these days I seem to be losing it. Maybe that should be, *lost* it. I dunno. But sometimes it gets so frustrating to see so many people view schooling as an absolute given for children, as though they'd never grow up to be productive individuals unless school were a part of their growth process. School is not normal for children, but so few people are willing to give up the convenience.

Enough of my diatribe. I'll close this and get it into the mail. Let me know if you'd like any of our articles on disk. Only takes a minute to copy them. And keep up your own great work, Mary!

Best wishes,
Helen

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Principal
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Dear Friends of Summerhill, FOS Trustees, parents of students at the school, and ex-Summerhillians:

Many of you have seen the Channel Four film "Summerhill at 70" on the Cutting Edge programme and many others of you have read about the film in the papers. Summerhill has never before been subjected to this kind of concerted barrage of criticism by the British press. The film, with its bleak picture of life at the school, has been seen by millions of people who now think they know what goes on at Summerhill. I'm afraid that for most people seeing is believing.

Contrary to the impression you may have received Summerhill is not today an unhappy, frightening and angry school, where children are uncared for by the adults in the community. We have a strong and mature staff at the school who are doing a professional job. The educational side of Summerhill life is given a high priority and our recent graduates have gone on to do well in other schools. The self government of the community is working very well and is particularly strong at the moment. There is a great deal of creativity at the school, music, dance, art, theatre and woodwork.

We at the school have been working hard to make Summerhill all that it can be and to bring it to a new level of self-understanding and we hoped that this

film would reflect some of this. We had no editorial control over the documentary but the filmmakers were radical American anthropologists with children of their own and a history of interest in, and admiration for, the school. We felt in relatively safe hands. Our hope was that their film would reflect the reality of life at Summerhill today. They chose instead mostly to focus on a few troubled 11-to-13-year-old new kids (among the 16 new kids who started in September) and their difficulty in adjusting to the freedom at Summerhill during a difficult term.

The headlines in the papers focused on the scene where a rabbit with myxomatosis is dispatched with a machette by a pupil at the school. If this scene with the rabbit had been titled so that it was clear that this was a sick and dying rabbit we might have avoided a lot of bad feeling. That rabbit had nothing to do with Summerhill. It is not even something that we can adequately defend as the boy did not have the community's permission for his mercy killing and probably would not have received it if he had asked for it.

Zoë and I saw the film before it was shown on television and both of us asked the filmmakers to cut the scene with the rabbit. Now we are asking Channel Four to remove the scene before this film is distributed to other countries around the world.

Many things were taken out of context. The scene of the pretend wedding bothers many people but within the autumn term that wedding was an important life-affirming ceremony. Only a few weeks before this event the school had gathered for a memorial service to celebrate the life of Akira, a young Summerhillian who had died after an asthma

attack in Japan. I felt at the time that the community chose to dress up and celebrate this mock wedding as a way of showing that life goes on.

Yet watching the film a lot of people have got the impression that this one-off entertainment, dreamed up by a couple of kids, is our regular and adult sponsored method of sanctifying illicit relationships.

I don't want to go through the whole film here trying to sort out the truth from the impression people seem to be getting. If there is anything shown at the school that disturbs you I hope you will write to me or call me (at 028 576 0303) and I will do my best to give you the larger picture. Or call Zoë and talk to her.

The thing I most dislike about the film, personally, is the name. The film does not live up to its title and present a symbolic representation of life at our school today, as many in the press have taken it to do. We have asked that for future broadcasts the title be changed, perhaps to "New Kids at Summerhill".

This film has not been an unmitigated disaster. After all, any film about Summerhill would be controversial. Some people have liked what they see in the film and have appreciated seeing conflicts brought out in the open at school meetings. We have been receiving many requests for information about the school from prospective parents. There doesn't seem to be any direct threat right now of the school being closed down.

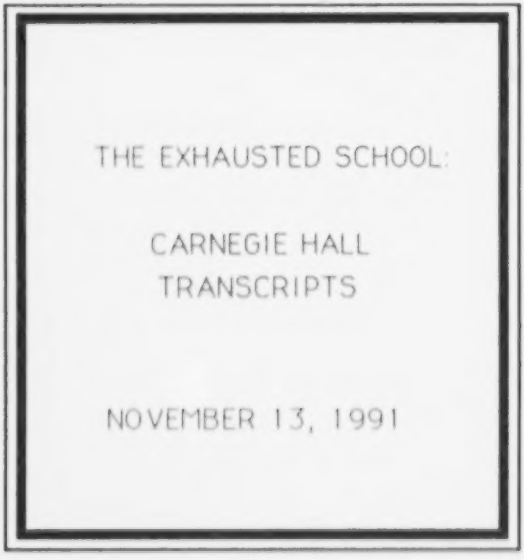
One other impression that the film has made must be refuted. Zoë, as the Headmistress of Summerhill, is seen only cursing kids in the meeting and cooing to a horse in the stables. This has created a very

unfair perception of her role within the school. Zoë has made an enormous effort to care for our community of individual children, for their parents and for the school's staff. She also carries the weight of looking after the old home of a widely scattered community of ex-Summerhillians.

If this film had worked out and had shown the world the power and goodness that is within the school we would all be basking in the reflected media glory. As it is all of us around Great Britain, and soon all of us around the world, will have to be standing up to defend our old school. I'm sorry that you will have to be sharing this burden with us. We will try not to let this happen again.

Yours sincerely,
Albert Lamb

Here follows the main content of "The Odysseus Group"'s - i.e., John Taylor Gatto & Co's - Carnegie Hall program. The presentations of two additional speakers, Pat Farenga from Holt Associates, speaking on Homeschooling, and Mary Leue from the Free School in Albany, speaking on school as community, are reproduced in the Winter, 1992, issue of ***ΣΚΟΛΕ.***



Here's how to reach John if you have something to offer in the way of ideas, money, help or speaking opportunities:

John Taylor Gatto
235 West 76th Street
New York, New York 10023
(212) 874-3631

A transcript of the entire Carnegie Hall program may be obtained by writing either to John or to Down-to-Earth Books, 72 Philip St., Albany, NY 12202 ($5.00).

VICTOR GONZALEZ
STUDENT, THE LAB SCHOOL
"Three Rules For This Evening's Class"

Good evening. *Welcome* to *"The Exhausted School"* ...Tonight we hope to teach you something about school... and something about education... They are not the same things... People who make a living from the school business would like to *think* that they are... but they are not... Benjamin Franklin was an educated man, but he hardly saw the inside of a school, and Thomas Jefferson *never* did... an education gives you the *power* to make your own decisions and a schooling teaches you to follow the lead of other people - not the same thing at all.

Since I've had a lot of experience with schools! I feel pretty comfortable warning you about your behavior while we're together... We'll get along just fine if you follow a few simple rules I have to follow myself every day...

The first rule is... don't go to the toilet without asking *my permission*... I've arranged for the guards to lock the doors so you can't get in without a written pass...

The second rule is... no water... You can't have any water while the show is going on... If you get thirsty that's too bad -- you should have thought of that before you sat down... If you're caught out of your seat going for water, I'll send for your mother...

The third rule is... I'll ring a loud BELL every forty minutes... When you hear it, drop whatever you're doing and move to another row... you have exactly three minutes to do this... don't be late... we'll take attendance in the new rows... and two latenesses equal one absence!... I don't want to humiliate any of you but I will if I have to...

We'll have a multiple choice test at Intermission... Be sure to use a Number 2 pencil... bubble in your answers carefully... if you open your test booklet before I tell you to, your paper will be torn to pieces in front of your eyes...

At this point I'm going to turn you over to the New York State Teacher of the Year to try to convince you that there really is a better way to learn. He's from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and he was my own eighth grade teacher long, long ago... last June... He hates schooling... but he loves education... Ladies and gentlemen... my friend and my teacher... John Taylor Gatto...

JOHN TAYLOR GATTO
New York State Teacher of the Year
The Lab School

"How Did We Ever Come to Believe that the State Should Tell Our Children What to Think?"

Keep in mind as I speak that I spent 26 years in public school classrooms. My perspective is that of an insider, not an outsider. You have been warned.

We live in a time of great school crisis, and that crisis is linked to a greater social crisis in the general community. We seem to have lost our identity. Children and old people are locked away from the business of the world to a degree without precedent - nobody talks to them anymore. Without children and old people mixing in daily life, a community has no future and no past, only a continuous present.

We live in networks, not communities. Everyone I know is lonely because of that. In some strange way school is a major actor in this tragedy, just as it is a major actor in the widening gulf among races and social classes. Using school as a sorting mechanism, we appear to be on the way to creating a caste system, complete with untouchables who wander through subway trains begging, and sleep upon the streets.

I've noticed a fascinating phenomenon in my 27 years of teaching: schools and schooling are increasingly irrelevant to the great enterprises of the planet. No one believes any more that scientists are made in science classes, or politicians in civics classes, or poets in English classes. The truth is that schools don't really teach anything except how to obey orders. This is a great mystery because thousands of humane, caring people work in schools as teachers and aides, and even as administrators. But

the abstract logic of the institution overwhelms their individual contributions. Although teachers do care, and do work very hard, the institution is psychopathic - by which I mean it has no conscience.

It rings a bell and the young man in the middle of writing a poem must close his notebook and move to a different cell where he memorizes that man and monkeys derive from a common ancestor, or that a man named Columbus discovered America even though millions of people were already here.

The idea that schooling and education are the same thing was never a convincing one, but in our lifetimes, yours and mine, it has become an exhausted one.

How did we ever come to believe that the State should tell our children what to think?

To escape the trap we are in will require acts of courage and imagination: the first an act of political resolve --to deconstruct the kind of schooling we have and return it to real people and real communities from abstract government hands; the second, to create a vision of *what* can be done and how to do it. My own job tonight will be to question the legitimacy of the school monopoly. In the hours we are together, you'll hear six separate logics of schooling, as different from each other as they are from the logic of government factory schools where I spend my own working life.

If you had a choice where to send your own kid you might well choose one of these six ideas, yet still be grateful you *knew* about the other five, even if they were not the right way for you. But the secret strength in this simple program design is that they do *not* represent all the worthwhile kinds of schooling. Many more exist concealed from view by the government monopoly and its press agents. These are unique, one-of-a-kind places you'll hear from

tonight - their existence proving there is no "one right way" to grow up.

How on earth did we ever accept the idea a government had the right to tell us where to go to school? How did we ever come to believe the State should tell our children what to think?

Our form of compulsion schooling is an invention of the State of Massachusetts, 140 years ago. It was resisted, sometimes with guns, by an estimated 80 percent of the Massachusetts population. A senator's office contended not too long ago that prior to compulsory government schooling the literacy rate in Massachusetts was 98 percent, but after it the figure never again reached above 91 percent.

I don't think we'll get rid of schools anytime soon, certainly not in my lifetime, but if we're going to change what has become a disaster we need to recognize that ignorance is inherent in the design of the thing. It is not the fault of bad teachers, or of too little money spent. Structurally, schools fly in the face of how children learn.

Take reading. People learn to read naturally and easily somewhere between the ages of 5 and 12, some earlier, some later. Late readers are indistinguishable from early readers in a very short time. But the natural course of things can be violently altered by rewarding early readers - and by pronouncing later readers "in need of remediation". The lie is then compounded by supplying the deficient with "special" treatment, including assignment to a separate junk category called "special education". You cannot "teach" children to read any more than you can "teach" them to walk and talk. Under the right conditions they teach themselves with great facility.

But you can teach children to hate reading, to do it poorly, and to hate themselves for not measuring up to the false premises of institutional reading practice - premises which provide the foundation for

our multi-billion dollar reading industry. The reading racket, in particular, has marked the burgeoning home school movement for legal sanctions because the presence of nearly a million children who've taught themselves to read, soundly and happily, creates a clear and present danger to the "whole world" crowd and to the "phonics" crowd alike. Bad for business.

Schools as we know them haven't been around very long. They don't have deep roots. That's one thing in our favor as we think about uprooting them. Schools as we have them were designed at the time of the American Civil War to be instruments for the scientific management of a mass population, the cheap labor immigration was providing to factory and farm. Schools are intended to produce through the application of formulae, formulaic human beings whose behavior can be predicted and controlled.

To a very great extent schools succeed in doing this. But in a nation increasingly disintegrated and demoralized, in a national order where the only successful people are independent, self-reliant, confident, and individualistic, the products of schooling are irrelevant. Well-schooled people are irrelevant. They can sell film and razor blades, push paper and talk on telephones, make deals or sit mindlessly before a flickering computer terminal, but they hate to be alone with themselves. As human beings they are useless.

I spoke in southern Illinois last week. During my talk a young man about 25 years old stood up in the back of the room and said in a tormented voice, "I'm 25 years old and have two college degrees. I don't know how to do anything. I don't know how to do anything at all. If the fan belt of my car broke in a snowstorm out in the country I'd freeze to death reciting the goddam Pythagorean theorem."

Much daily misery around us is caused by the fact our schools force children to grow up absurd. Any reform in schooling must deal with its absurdities: it is absurd and antilife to be part of a system that compels you to sit in confinement with people exactly the same age and social class. That system effectively cuts you off from information you need to be sane, and cuts you off from your own past and future. It seals you into a continuous present much the same way television does. It is absurd and anti-life to be part of a system compelling you to listen to a stranger read poetry when you ache to learn to construct buildings; it is absurd and anti-life to sit with a stranger discussing the construction of buildings when the rush of language inside you makes you want to write a poem.

It is absurd and anti-life to move from cell to cell at the sound of a buzzer, every day of your natural youth, in an institution that allows you no private time or space.

What parent would allow such a horror to be inflicted if their own schooling had left them with the power to understand? "What about 'basics'?" you say. If you are willing to face the truth you would see that only talking is basic to the society we've made. We are a land of talkers now. We pay talkers most and admire talkers most - and so our children talk constantly, following public models of television, radio, and schoolteachers. It is very difficult to get children to take "basics" seriously these days - especially in the social environment of schools - because they really *aren't* basic to the world we've forced on the children. None of us stays silent long enough to figure out what the new basics really are.

Two institutions control our children's lives - television and schooling, probably in that order. Both reduce the real world to a never-ending, nonstop abstraction. For most of history until recently, the

time of a child would be occupied in real work, real charity, real adventures, real apprenticeships, and the realistic search for mentors who might teach what you really needed to learn. What *that* is is, of course, different for each of us.

A great deal of time was spent in community pursuits, practicing affection, negotiating, and studying every level of the society around you first-hand. Also in learning how to make a home, a living, and dozens of other tasks necessary to become a whole man or woman. *There was a continuity and a comprehensiveness to life.* It was not fragmented into subjects and specialties to provide work for professionals, nor was it arranged into sequences that made no sense. The kind of education history reveals was administered most often by people you *knew* - not by total strangers arranged into a priesthood called "teachers".

In the new world order that was arranged for us after the Civil War the calculus was changed. Scientific positivism, as it used to be called, wanted the calculus changed and Horace Mann and Frederick Taylor were nothing if they were not religiously Positivist. Today the tabulation of hours in a young life reads like this: My children watch television 55 hours a week according to recent reports, and they sleep 56. That leaves them 57 hours in which to grow up strong and competent and whole. But my children attend school 30 hours more, spend 8 hours preparing for school, and in goings and comings, and an additional 7 hours a week in something called "home"-work - although this is really more schoolwork except in "Newspeak". After the 45 school hours are removed a total of 12 hours remain each week from which to fashion a private person - one that can like, trust, and live with itself. Twelve hours. But my kids must eat, too, and that takes some time. Not much, because they've lost the

tradition of family dining - how they learn to eat in school is best called "feeding" - but if we allot just 3 hours a week to evening feedings, we arrive at a net total of private time for each child of 9 hours.

It's not enough. It's not enough, is it? The richer the kid the less TV he watches, of course, but the rich kid's time is just as narrowly proscribed by his inevitable assignments to private lessons from more hired strangers, seldom in areas of his own actual choice.

This demented schedule is an efficient way to create dependent human beings, needy people unable to fill their own hours, unable to initiate lines of meaning to give substance and pleasure to their existence. It is a national disease, this dependency and aimlessness, and schooling and television and busy work - the total Chautauqua package - has a lot to do with it.

Think of the things killing us as a nation: narcotic drugs, brainless competition, dishonesty, greed, recreational sex, the pornography of violence, gambling, alcohol, and the worst pornography of all - lives devoted to buying things, accumulation as a philosophy - all of these are addictions of dependent personalities. That is what our brand of schooling must inevitably produce. A large fraction of our total economy has grown up around providing service and counseling to inadequate people - and inadequate people are the main product of government compulsion schools.

I want to tell you what the effect is on children of taking the time they need to grow up and forcing them to spend it on abstractions. No reform that brainlessly defines our national problem as reading, writing, and arithmetic will be anything more than a coward's evasion of the nightmare we've inflicted on our children.

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The children I teach are indifferent to the adult world. This defies the experience of thousands of years. Nobody wants to grow up these days because assuming responsibility takes practice, but schooltime precludes practice.

The children I teach have almost no curiosity. What they do have is transitory, they cannot even concentrate long on jobs they assign themselves. Can you see a possible connection between bells ringing again and again to change classes and this phenomenon of evanescent attention? When everything you do is interrupted before it's finished, why should you care about anything?

The children I teach have a poor sense of the future, of how tomorrow is linked to today. The exact moment they are in is the boundary of their consciousness. That was the dream of a 19th century Frenchman named Auguste Comte, and before he died in the insane asylum at Charenton his ideas had a profound impact on Horace Mann and the American schoolroom, and on Frederic Taylor and the American workplace.

The children I teach have no sense of the past and how it predestinated the present, how it limits their choices, how it shapes their lives and values. A long line of Western thinkers, all of them childless men like Comte, have understood that breaking a child's ties with the past cracks him away from his own family. And separating parents and children has been the goal of childless male philosophers since Plato wrote about its value in *The Republic*. Without strong family ties, he said, children are easier subjects for central planning. Augustine knew that, and Erasmus, and Bacon, and Descartes, and Hobbes, and Rousseau - and all the other childless men who helped to architect the government schooling we have today.

The children I teach are cruel to each other; they lack compassion for misfortune, they laugh at weakness, they have contempt for people whose need for help shows too plainly.

The children I teach are uneasy with intimacy, solitude, or unguarded speech. They cannot deal with genuine intimacy because of a lifelong habit of preserving a secret inner self beneath their public school personalities, personalities which must remain open at all times, as a prostitute's body is open to the constant inspection and ranking of strangers. Our children's public personalities are kept constantly under surveillance by authorities in an orgy of voyeurism. The outer persona of the children I teach is fabricated from artificial bits and pieces of behavior borrowed from television, or acquired by studying the preferences of schoolteachers. The real self is too small and vulnerable to bear longtime exposure, because it has had no privacy in which to develop strength and integrity. Since exposure is required in intimate relationships, these must be avoided. My children are not who they pretend to be. Most of them aren't anybody at all, thanks to school. It's frightening.

The children I teach are strikingly materialistic, following the lead of schoolteachers who materialistically "grade" everything, and television mentors who offer everything in the world for sale.

The children I teach are dependent, passive, timid in the presence of new challenges. This timidity is often masked by surface bravado, by the exuberance of youth, by anger or aggressiveness, but underneath the bluster is emptiness, mirroring the great vacuum, the black hole of government schooling which draws in vast energies, but emits little.

I could name other conditions school reform must tackle, but by now you will have grasped my thesis. Schools and television *cause* these patholo-

gies. It's a simple matter of arithmetic. Between schooling and television all the time children have to become adults is eaten up. That is what has destroyed the American family; it is no longer a factor in the education of its own young, it no longer has access to its own children.

Tonight's program is one of choices, choices for parents, choices for young people, choices for communities. Where did we ever get the crazy idea that government had the right to tell us how our own kids should grow up?

Where did we ever get the grotesque idea that the State has a right to educate our kids? Where did we ever get the notion there is only one right way to grow up instead of hundreds? How did we lose our way and come to believe that human value and human quality can be reduced to numbers derived from paper/pencil tests?

DAN GREENBERG
The Sudbury Valley School
"School For a Post-Industrial Society"

Three hundred years ago, if somebody had ventured the opinion it is possible to create a country in which people from all walks of life, all persuasions, nationalities, and backgrounds could live together in freedom, peace, and harmony, could live happy lives, could realize their personal dreams - a country in which people showed each other mutual respect, in which people treated each other with complete equality, and in which all decisions were made by the mutual consent of the governed, people would have considered that person a crazy utopian and would have brought all the experience of human history from the dawn of time as witness to the impossibility of such a dream. They would have said, "People just don't live that way. It doesn't work. It can't happen."

Happily for us sitting here today, two centuries ago our founding fathers did not treat that dream as utopian and instead found a way to make it possible to put it into practice. They did something unique in the history of the human race. They had before them the task of creating a new country, a new form of government. And they set about this task not by revising existing forms of government, not by starting from the models that they had around them and tinkering with them and adding a little here and a little there, but by sitting together and spending a tremendous amount of time and thought on "zero-base planning", on creating a government from scratch, starting from no assumptions other than those that they were willing to make explicitly at the moment. We have records of their deliberations, and

many writings that reveal what they thought and how they came to their conclusions. They proceeded by examining the condition of the human race, the nature of the human animal, and the social and cultural conditions of the world into which the country they were founding was going to be born.

The founders of Sudbury Valley School, beginning in 1965, did much the same thing when it came to education. We too were dissatisfied - dissatisfied with the models of schools that we had available to us at the time, and we had a deep conviction that there was more at stake than just the proper curriculum or the right pedagogical methodology or the right mix of social and emotional and psychological factors that had to be applied to the educational scene. We were convinced that the time had come for complete re-examination of what it is that a school had to be about if it were to serve as an appropriate agent of society in this country in the late 20th century and beyond the year 2000. So we spent several years working on this, trying to gain an understanding of what school is for and how the goals of schools can best be realized.

Now, it's pretty much generally agreed that there are two major roles that a school fills. One is to provide an environment in which children can grow to maturity, from a state of formativeness and dependence to a state of independence as adults who have found their unique way of personal expression in life. The second goal is social rather than individual. The school has to be the environment in which the culture prepares itself for its continuation from generation to generation. This is a goal that a community requires of its educational system if it wants its way of life to survive.

There is no guarantee that the social goal and the individual goal will mesh. In an authoritarian society, for example, where the lives of every single

individual are controlled by some central authority, the social goal promulgating the authoritarian system is in clear conflict with any primacy given to the individual goals of the people in that society. One of the functions of a school in an authoritarian society must therefore be to subject the individual to severe restraints in order to force that individual to meet the needs of society as a whole. The educational systems of highly authoritarian regimes play down individual variation and individual freedom and effectively try to eliminate them.

On the other hand, in anarchistic educational systems, the individual is focused on, almost entirely to the exclusion of society. The individual is elevated above all else and modes of social interaction and cultural survival are given very little attention.

When we started thinking about Sudbury Valley School, we had no way of knowing whether there would be any way of harmonizing individual needs and social needs in the United States today. We started by examining the social side because it was clear to us that no school could possibly survive if it didn't meet the needs of modern American society. It might survive as a fringe school for some few discontented people who perhaps wanted a different way of life in this country. But as an institution that was meaningful to the mainstream of American society, there was no hope for it to survive unless it could tie into the deep needs of American culture in this era. So we set about asking ourselves, "What is it really that the society wants today in order to flourish?"

The key to the answer to this question was the realization that the United States is fundamentally a free market economy in which personal freedom is maximized on a social level. Ours is a society which, as a community, extols personal freedoms for its individual members and has social ways of guarantee-

ing these freedoms through the grant of rights and redress to individuals. In addition, the United States, in 1965, was clearly entering an economic era which was a novelty on the world scene - namely, the post-industrial economic era, which was beginning to be recognized as a reality. Today, of course, the image of a post-industrial society is commonplace. The key concept which differentiates a post-industrial economy from an industrial economy is the realization that in a post-industrial society, in principle, every task that can be defined by a set routine can be taken out of human hands and put into the hands of some sort of information processing machine. The main difference between an industrial and a post-industrial society lies not in the presence or absence of produced goods, but in the means by which those goods are produced. In an industrial society it is essential to have a virtual ARMY of human beings who are fit somehow into the mechanism of the overall industrial machine, who play an integrated role in the production process as parts of the machine.

The strength of the industrial society was that by using machines, it could magnify many, many thousandfold the ability of the society to produce material benefits for its members. But the machines couldn't do this alone. The machines were not sophisticated enough to carry out this process unaided. In order to make it happen what was needed was human intervention and human help. Human and machine became as one, something that probably has never been better illustrated than in the great classic film Modern Times that Charlie Chaplin produced over fifty years ago.

The deal that was made by various societies, one after the other, when they chose to enter the industrial era was to agree to forfeit much of their humanity, much of their freedom as individuals, in

order to benefit as a society from the wealth and prosperity that the industrial era promised. This isn't an altogether ridiculous deal by any means. It's perfectly understandable that human societies that for thousands of years had accepted as inevitable the grinding poverty and deprivation and misery of the overwhelming majority of people - it's not surprising that such societies, when faced with the promise that miraculously and with incredible suddenness virtually the entire population could raise its standard of living and survive in a relatively comfortable manner, chose, one after another, to sacrifice willingly some of their personal freedoms, many of which were illusory anyway, to achieve that goal.

The post-industrial era is of a different nature, however. The post-industrial era ask no sacrifice of the material benefits that the industrial era provided. On the contrary, the development of sophisticated, computer-driven machines and information processing systems has promised an even greater degree of national wealth and diversity. But the demands on the individual are now completely different. In the postindustrial society there is essentially no place for human beings who are not able to function independently. There is no room for people trained to be cogs in a machine. Such people have been displaced permanently from the economic system. The needs of a post-industrial society, regardless of the governmental structure, are for people who can be independent, entrepreneurial producers of economic benefits. People have to take initiatives, to think for themselves, to create for themselves, to become productive for themselves. In a post-industrial society, there is no longer a mass of predetermined slots into which to fit people. The economic demands of post-industrial America are something that you hear from personnel directors in every industry and company today, small or large. The de-

mands are for creative people with initiative, self-starters, people who know how to take responsibility, exercise judgment, make decisions for themselves.

This meant to us that a school in post-industrial America, in order to serve the culture, has to have the following features: It has to allow for a tremendous amount of diversity. It has to allow for people to become, on their own, selfstarters, initiators, entrepreneurs. And, at the same time, it has to allow children to grow up completely at home with the cultural values of our country, especially such essential values as tolerance, mutual respect, and self-government.

We then looked at the requirements for individual realization. These too had undergone a rather interesting change of perspective through the work of psychologists and developmental theorists. The commonly accepted model of the human had been that of a *tabula rasa*, a clean slate, born as infants with basically nothing in their heads and therefore growing up to be what other people have written on that slate. That's a model that put a tremendous responsibility on the people around the child who write on that child's slate. In a sense, that model was the utter negation of the individual as an independent being, and the subjugation of the individual will to the influences of those around it who impose their wills and their intellects on it from infancy onwards.

But Aristotle, 2,000 years ago, and developmental psychologists in recent times, developed other models that seemed to us, when we were creating Sudbury Valley School, to be much more realistic and much more in line with what we saw to be the nature of the human species. These people considered children from birth as being *naturally curious*, as being active participants in the learning process -- not born with blank minds but, on the con-

trary, born with information processing systems in their brains which require of them, demand of them, by nature, to reach out, to explore, to seek to understand the world and make sense of it, using their sensory interactions and their agile brains to build pictures of reality - world views - in their minds that enable them to function in the world. In our view there was no such thing as a passive child. Every child is active. Every child we had ever seen, certainly in early infancy, was devoured with curiosity, was energetic, was able to overcome almost every barrier, was courageous, persistent, and constantly seeking to meet every challenge that came their way. And these are traits that we saw continuing year after year in children as long as it wasn't forced out of them by some crunching outside intervention.

So it seemed clear to us that the ideal environment for children to attain the full realization of their inherent intellectual, emotional, and spiritual potentials had to be one which, subject only to constraints imposed by safety, is totally open for exploration, free of restraints, free of external impositions; a place where each individual child would be granted the freedom to reach out everywhere and anywhere they wished so that they could follow through on all of their curious probing.

This realization came upon us *like a thunderclap* because we saw such a beautiful fit between the needs of society today and the needs of the individual. Both society and the individual in modern post-industrial America require that schools be an environment in which children are FREE, and in which children can LEARN HOW TO USE FREEDOM, how to be self-governing, how to live together as free people in peace and harmony and mutual respect. Not an environment in which one group dominated, or exercised power over another. Not an environment in which children were put into any sort of ex-

ternally imposed track, or forced to think about prescribed subjects. But an environment in which children and adults alike work together to guarantee free accessibility to the world, to the greatest extent possible, for each and every child And that, in effect, is what Sudbury Valley school is about.

If you come to Sudbury Valley, the first impression you get is that of a regular school in recess. You notice children, outdoors and indoors, freely going on and off campus, freely walking about, moving from room to room, changing from group to group, talking, interacting, reading, playing. So much playing! More than anything else, the children at Sudbury Valley School, of all ages, play. The better they are at playing, the better they are at fashioning new models with which to understand the world. Play is the greatest teacher of all. Every innovative adult who has ever written about the creative process has talked about the extent to which he or she *played* with new ideas, moving freely in and out of new, original conceptions of the world without being hampered by preconceived notions of reality. The children at Sudbury Valley know how to play. They know how to take their play seriously. They know how to play with intensity and with focus.

Sudbury Valley is a community governed by itself. Every child in Sudbury Valley has a vote in every matter that pertains to the school. The school is governed by a School Meeting in which four-year-olds have the same vote as adults. *Every decision* in the school is made by that School Meeting. The budget, the hiring and firing of staff, the letting of contracts. In the Sudbury Valley community, no adult wields any particular power over any child, nor does any child wield power over any other child. All decisions are made in the School Meeting or delegated by the School Meeting to people elected on a temporary basis to fill a particular need. Our community is

a model of democratic governance, much like the New England communities that we serve.

The children at Sudbury Valley, from age four and up, by being free, learn how to function as free people in a free society. They learn how to find their own pursuits. They learn how to occupy themselves. They learn how to create their own environments. They learn how to respect each other. They learn how to cooperate. They learn how to use the School Meeting to legislate community rules, and to forge compromises when there are mutually exclusive demands made on property, or on places, or on activities. They learn how to meet challenges. They learn how to overcome failure since there is nobody there to shield them from failure. They learn how to try something and relish success, and they learn how to try something and fail at it - and try again. All of this takes place in an environment in which there is absolutely NO outside intervention of curriculum, of guidance, of grading, of testing, of evaluation, of segregation by age, or of the imposition of arbitrary outside authority.

The school has now been running for 24 years. It has in it children of all ages. We have 125 students now and we have an incredible record of fiscal success as well as educational success. When we first started, people looking in from the outside said that if children have a real say in financial matters, their inexperience will lead them to squander the resources of the school in a profligate manner. They'll buy candy. They'll waste their money on trivialities. The facts speak otherwise. The ability of children to govern themselves is in no way less impressive than that of adults. Our school has never received one cent of government subsidy, endowment, foundation money, or any other outside funds. It is totally tuition-based. The tuition in 1968 was on a par with the public school expenditures in the schools around

us - $900 per pupil. Today, 24 years later, at a time when educational costs have soared in other schools, and when all we hear is that not enough money is being spent on education, Sudbury Valley School costs about $3000 per pupil, less than half the per pupil costs of the local public schools. And that's the whole cost, including capital expenses and including all the other hidden costs that other schools write on different sets of books. The tremendous efficiency of our fiscal operation is due entirely to the manner in which decisions are made by the entire school community, and due to the extraordinarily modest expenditures required by students who are eagerly and intensely pursuing their passionate interests.

Educationally, the Sudbury Valley School has had a remarkable record. The students are bright-eyed, intelligent, articulate, and are equally comfortable conversing about ideas, climbing trees, hanging out with children ten years older or ten years younger -- even with adults. They have mastered pursuits as varied as calculus, photography, French horn, skateboarding, pottery, poetry, bookkeeping, pathology, backwoods survival, leather-working, carpentry - the list is almost as long as the number of people who have been enrolled. Despite the fact that when we started people said that our students who wanted to go on to college would never be admitted because they had no grades, no transcripts, no school recommendations, our record has been an unbroken one. We have a 100 percent rate of acceptance into colleges, trade schools, art schools and the like for every single student who has ever wanted to continue their formal education. Our students present themselves to college Admissions Officers as people who are self-contained, who know why they want to go on with their studies, who understand who they are, and who have figured out

how they want to carry on with their lives. The Sudbury Valley graduate has a degree of self-knowledge, self esteem and an awareness of his or her own strengths that is unexcelled in schools today for people of comparable age.

We feel that Sudbury Valley is a superb model of an educational environment for post-industrial America. The joy, happiness, pleasantness, friendliness, and warmth that extend to anyone who is part of the school community is palpable. Trust, too, is everywhere, and everywhere to be seen. Belongings lie unguarded, doors unlocked, equipment unprotected and available to all. We have open admissions - everyone can attend. And by walking across the threshold, become, in an instant, part of the warmth and trust that is the school.

Sudbury Valley School is a true democratic republic of children and adults working together. Does it sound utopian? It may, but no less utopian than the United States of America sounded when people first heard about it in the rest of the world. Our school, we feel, is indeed a utopia that is as real as the country of which it is a part.

Thank you.

In addition to founding and inspiring Sudbury Valley School, along with his wife Hanna and a host of other splendid staff persons, Dan also writes books reflecting his voluntaristic, latitudinarian humanism based on long experience as well as sound theory concerning the nature of life and growth. (I use those mouth-filling terms to describe Dan because I know it will please him! - and because I love to tease.)

KATHLEEN YOUNG
The Hawthorne Valley Farm School
"In the Belly of the Dragon"

When you're going to give a speech in our circles, you want to quote somebody. The most quotable act in town is John Gatto so I had a hard time tonight figuring out how I was going to start because you've got the man himself here.

So I was pondering about this and I thought I'd come up with a bit of a dragon - we always like to talk about dragons - you may not believe in them but I do. I have a feeling that all of us have arrived in the belly of the dragon. That we have, somehow, brought ourselves tonight to hear the ideals we all have (to give us courage). And I was working on this, and I was sitting at my desk, and I had a letter that I had opened. It was from France and it said, "Dear Director", or whatever it is that the book from French to English tells you to say when you're writing a letter to America, and it said: "We have heard about your school, and we have heard about the dream of Karl Ege, and we want the dream to come true in our little village in France."

And this I found most astonishing and most frightening. Because in a certain sense Karl Ege's dream has taken us to where we are - and as I just said, I think we're in the belly of the dragon - and I wondered how to answer the man.

Karl Ege was an educator. He was working here in New York City in the Rudolf Steiner school on East 79th Street. He and his colleagues thought that students in the city needed a country experience. He felt that the students needed the farm and the life on the land. He and his friends began to look for a farm. And they looked and they looked, apparently they looked at many sites, and they found a

farm in Columbia County upstate, about two hours' drive, and they purchased this farm.

Now, if you go to this farm you will find a thriving, bio-dynamic place. The cows are well, the chickens are well, the pigs are well, the farmers are well, the apprentices are well... The farmers have succeeded. They make yoghurt; they have a bakery. They make quark cheese - which you can only get in Switzerland and Hawthorne Valley Farm.

Very soon after, the school started across the street from the farm. And the little school has grown to 300 students, a full nursery through 12th grade program. The dream of Karl Ege was to combine the work on the land with the work of education, and to "warm it up" - to supplement it, to make it *live* through work with artists and artisans in the community.

And so a painting school was started. And there's a little printing endeavor. There are many efforts to bring about an answer to this incredible artistic need we have. Farmers have it. Teachers have it. Students have it. Parents have it.

And there is this hope that one could integrate all these dreams together, to make *one* that would live.

In addition, we have this little house where children can come from all over, and they can stay for a week at a time in the visiting student's program. The students that visit love to get up and gather the milk and the eggs at 4 and 5 in the morning. Perhaps they study some geology, perhaps they study some botany, or perhaps they go cross-country skiing - but all have this life on the land which was part of the dream.

We have been there 18 years, and we have felt good *and* bad about what we do. Hawthorne Valley is a Waldorf School, and Waldorf schools have a whole theory about the developing child.

One day we had two or three visitors from the New York State Education Department, and we welcomed them. They were lovely people, well-dressed and articulate, very warm and interested in what we do. And these visitors were spread out in the school; they stayed for the day. And they said to us they were looking for a developmental approach to education in New York State.

That we have. So we put them in various places, and we held our breath while they went around through the day. We tried to guide them into our school life.

If they went to the kindergarten they would have seen children playing. They would have seen children baking bread or making soup. They make the most remarkable soup. It's made with a pot of water and anything any child brings in that day. I have never understood how they make such delicious soup that way. But their mothers send in either what's very fresh or what's very unfresh, whichever the case may be, and they chop it and scrape it, and they put it in the pot - and someone comes along and adds *something*, because it's a *wonderful* soup.

And the kids learn to paint - they have watercolor classes - and they do various things. But they don't learn to read, they don't have computer classes, and we hope to God they don't watch television. These children are guided through the day in play and in love and in the most beautiful surroundings we can create. They learn French. They learn German in our school. Both through song and poetry. Children are happy in our school.

If our visitor went to grades one through eight, they would have had eight *different* kinds of experiences. In our school the teacher carries a class through eight years. In our way, whatever happens between the students and the teacher has a strong element of a *bond* to it. So if I'm the teacher in the

fourth grade and I've had the children for four years, I can say, "Remember when?" and "Remember when?" and, together, that *moment* is discipline enough. Both of us remember what happened then, and we can go on from there.

The teacher who carries the class, grades one through eight, has the task of changing himself or herself every day because he must meet a growing human being. And if you *don't* change, you're the one who gets out. The children tell you instantly if you haven't understood. And you know that there's nothing wrong with *them*, there's something wrong with you.

You can figure it out. You go home and cry a little bit and you figure it out. And the next day there's something else that you have to figure out. And so for eight years you grow together.

The children make their own books. They create their own literature. And they find *reading* their own literature the easiest thing in the world - because it comes from the inside out. If a child cannot read in our school, we work with him to see what else he can do. And we work on that a lot. He can sing or he can play music or he can draw beautiful pictures. And we work with that until the moment when he decides to read. And then *he* reads, to us. In this way the children grow strong in their confidence.

The main material is taught in a two-hour stretch of time in the morning. The academic work is in the morning when the children are awake and the teachers are awake. Then we try to flow through the rest of the day with much artistic activity. The children are very lively.

I taught a class for eight years, and I ran into some of the girls in the hall today. They were quite surprised that their teacher could get dressed up and look decent enough to "go out" in the world! I

said, "I'm going to talk about you a lot at Carnegie Hall," and they said, "Please don't!" I said, "Ohhh, remember, remember the second grade," and they got fear on their faces. And then they lightened up when they realized I wasn't *really* going to tell you what happened in the second grade!

These children were strong, sturdy, healthy children. A mother described these children in an interview as "having creative leadership potential". And I had a whole class of children with creative leadership potential! And in the kindergartens when I first went to just look at the children and try to see whether I would be able to take on such a job, some of them were under the cupboards, and some of them were under the chairs, and some of them were out in the halls, and some of them had run into the little bathrooms... because *they* knew who I was. And I said (to myself), "This is the group I want." So the first day of school they came and sat down in lovely little wooden chairs at lovely little wooden desks in lovely little rows and I thought, "Of course, this is what children love to do."

After about 15 minutes sitting at these desks they started wiggling, and I started learning how to teach.

Now we have a very fine possibility to learn about Man through history and fairy tales, as well as through current events. The classic literature is available to us. But we have the freedom to choose within this literature curriculum, this history curriculum, what actually will meet this individual child's needs, or this group of children, - what will speak to them, to their hearts, so that they will know who they are when we finish the story.

We tell stories and try not to read them. It's a very interesting thing - if you've experienced the difference when you tell a story or read a story - be-

cause the interaction is so strong in "telling" that you're building this bond.

Mathematics? Through all the different ways of trying to find the mystery of numbers, the mystery of fractions: Cake, pizza, whatever the teacher loves the best, starting with cutting it into fractions. And you find these metabolic ways, if you're a teacher like me, to find these ways to teach whatever the children need to know.

Now, if you've done your job rightly, whenever the children are in the eighth grade they say, "Mrs. Young... you're so weeiirrdd!" And then you know that they are ready to move on.

And if you've done your job right, and the student feels comfortable with the practical arts, they will feel... I...CAN...DO...ANYTHING. I can be anybody. I can go anywhere. I can stand on my feet in the world and I can make a difference.

Now, at the end of the day when our visitors were finished with their inspection, I sat down with them. And I wasn't sure what they would have found in the various places because a variety of things could have happened. I thought perhaps it would be the music or the painting... and we sat together and I said, "Well?" They shook their heads and began to look very doubtful, and I thought, "Oh, Lord, what did they see?!" And they said, "The problem is you seem to like the children."

I'm not kidding, that's what they said. And they said, "Furthermore, you seem to like each other." And they said they had actually seen us talking in the halls together. They thought that was the most astonishing thing that could not be translated to the New York public school system.

I think we are in the belly of the dragon. I think we led ourselves there. Maybe *out of fear of being on the outside* of the dragon because they are so ugly. We have to get together to lead ourselves and

our children out. We connected with some of John Gatto's ideas in relationship to young people finding their way in the world through apprenticeships, through community service, through a connection with the world. In our quiet valley in upstate New York it's critical that we help some young people come to adulthood with the confidence they are with us in the way *out*. We can't do it unless we join hands with all the rest who see that.

We feel that if it, the dragon, has come even to Columbia County, and we can see it, that the hour is probably late and we must move together.

Kathleen Young is the director of Hawthorne Valley School, a very successful Waldorf school (inspired by the thought of nineteenth century German mystic Rudolph Steiner) in the mid-Hudson valley district of New York state.

ROLAND LEGIARDI LAURA
Former Student, The Lab School
"Remembering"

Good evening, everyone, it's a pleasure to see you all here and share this slice of history that's being written tonight. It's my privilege to be the one to close out the first half of our program. It's actually a wonderful irony that I am up on this stage in white tie tonight. The last time I was at Carnegie formally I wasn't permitted up on stage. It was for the Stuyvesant High School Commencement exercise, and the year was 1970. A group of us were protesting the killings at Kent State and the invasion of Cambodia. In an act of defiance we came to graduate dressed in our gym shorts. The administration was not amused and refused to let us up on stage accept our diplomas. It's amazing what a change in style can do for one's reputation.

When John Gatto asked me to speak here, he said, "You know, Roland, you're going to have to write a speech! I protested, saying that I'd never written a speech before in my life. "Don't worry," he said, "Just condense your entire educational experience to fifteen minutes, and make it as personal and intimate as possible, while still being relevant to everyone in the audience." So here goes...

First a bit about myself: I was born and raised here on Manhattan's upper West Side. I was an only child, and my parents were European immigrants. My mother, a fashion model and jetsetter before there were jets, settled down when I was born and devoted herself to raising me. My father, a foreign correspondent during the second world war, had a restless intellect and changed careers as often as I changed diapers.

During my childhood he worked as a translator, a journalist, a private eye, a chef in an Italian restaurant and a puppeteer in a marionette theater. We never had much money, but I never really felt poor.

I attended public school in my neighborhood from kindergarten on.

I remember my first year at school quite well. The classroom was big and well lit. There were maybe 20 or 25 of us in class. School only went till noon, and we had two teachers, Miss Parker and Miss Smith. I don't remember being taught very much formally. But we had lots of crayons, paints, construction paper, clay, wooden blocks, and musical instruments. Our teachers read us stories and took us on class trips to Central Park and the Museum of Natural History. The class was a rainbow mix of cultures, and my two teachers were young, full of energy and cared about us.

I can remember learning three big lessons that year. The first was a lesson about death and responsibility. We had a goldfish bowl in class, and each day I'd watch Miss Parker feed the fish until one day I decided to feed them myself. Being of Italian/Jewish background I naturally wanted them to eat more. Well, that afternoon one of the fish was found floating, bellyup. I'd emptied half a can of fish food into the bowl... The teachers handled it with sensitivity but I remember crying bitterly in class and feeling sad for a long time.

The second lesson came at the hands of the class bully. He took great pleasure each day in knocking over my wooden block buildings. One day I grabbed him, threw him to the floor and punched him in the eye. He came to school the next morning with a black eye and his mother. I was scolded for hitting him, but he never bothered anyone again.

The third lesson, in the art of romance, came from my mother. It's a piece of wisdom that to this day I believe is in practice universally and is probably the source of most of the trouble in relationships. I was having problems with two girls in class, Maria and Barbara. Maria it seemed liked me very much, too much, and I didn't like her. She wasn't convinced by my rejection and chased me around the classroom every chance she had. Barbara on the other hand didn't seem to know I was alive, and was not at all impressed by my gifts of finger paintings and snack pretzels. I explained the situation to my mother and the advice she offered was revelatory to say the least. She suggested I start chasing Maria whenever she came close to me and that I completely ignore Barbara. In disbelief, I followed my mother's instructions and inside of a week, Maria, repulsed by my advances had found a new beau, and Barbara was pushing other girls aside to hold my hand on class trips. All in all, kindergarten was a positive experience.

Something strange began to happen in first grade. The school was starting to sort us out. I wasn't really aware of what it meant then, but I remember my mother telling me that I was being put into a special class for bright children. They called it an IGC class back then. That meant Intellectually Gifted Children. My mother seemed proud and pleased that I was in this class, but I remember her telling my father about how she hated going to the PTA meetings with all those "pushy, aggressive" mothers and how it was a "clique" of parents who decided the makeup of these special classes.

School started, and I liked my new teacher. Her name was Mrs. Cohen, and she was very warm and a grandmother to all of us. She told us all that we were her special children and that she was going to teach us how to read and write and do arithmetic.

My mother, bless her anally retentive soul, saved all my exercise books, and looking through them the other day I noticed a few interesting things. The first is that I received lots of red checks and stars which seemed to indicate that I was doing well. These little marks were my first experiences with being graded. But sprinkled in with those red checks and stars of excellence were a stream of brief comments: Roland is taking too much time, Roland interferes with other children during the work, Roland was slow today, all the other children finished before him... Roland seems to be interested in other things during his exercises. So here's this 6 1/2 year-old boy with terminally messy hair and a shirt that would never stay tucked in anywhere, being told that he's too slow at doing an exercise, not focusing, disrupting the class and yet, I also seemed to be getting plenty of those red checks and stars. Hold this image in your mind for a while, and let's move on.

In second grade, the checks and stars were replaced with numbers from one to ten, and we started having little tests in class. We were given report cards with grades ranging from unsatisfactory to excellent, and there was space on the report cards for the teachers to write brief comments.

My second grade teacher was nicknamed Mrs. Dynamite; she was strict and harsh, and I filled ten notebooks that year with classroom exercises and homework. She even gave us homework over the Christmas and Easter holidays. I was still getting those checks and stars and tens for a perfect comments were the same too. Roland does not seem interested in his class work. By junior high school the ratings had been replaced with numerical averages and teachers' comments were eliminated. Finally, when I attended high school my grades were computed numerically to three decimal points. I knew

exactly where I stood in a class of 750 hormonally charged 15-year-old males each day of the year. I was told that my goal in life was to attend the college of my choice, and that the surest way to achieve that goal was to get the highest grades possible. The effect on me and my peers was electric. We became our grades.

Despite the constant mixed messages and the official policy line that grades were only crude indicators at best of a person's merit, everyone knew that each and every point higher that you scored on a test brought you that much closer to the college of your dreams. An instant hierarchy was created, and everyone jostled everyone else to grab an edge. Kids would argue with their teachers about a test score. Parents would come in demanding that their son's classes be changed to another teacher who was an easy grader. Students started preparing for their SAT's with after school classes in ninth grade. And cheating was a frowned upon but common occurrence.

I learned how to test well during those years at Stuyvesant High School. I spent 20 percent of my class time taking tests and 50 percent of my study time preparing for them. I learned how to score high. It wasn't hard if you understood the basic principles of testing. I could teach them all to you now in about 20 minutes. I would do it tonight if we had the time. I graduated with highest honors from the city's most respected public high school. And I felt sick inside. I hadn't mastered my subjects. I simply knew how to answer questions.

I remember I had a particularly hard time with Trigonometry - I just didn't get it. My class average over the semester was 32, 65 was passing, and I needed to get at least an 85 in order to save my overall average. I went up to my math teacher one day after class and bet him that I could score over 90

on the State Regents Trig Exam. He laughed, said I was nuts but promised to give me whatever I scored on the exam as my final grade. For two weeks before the test I went to bed at night with my eyes open and the lights on. I had plastered the walls of my room with trig formulas. I scored 91 on the exam. kept his word, and two days later I had forgotten everything.

I remember always feeling rushed in school. The teachers were rushed, the course texts were impossible to cover in one semester, so class work was always abbreviated. You couldn't ask too many questions, there wasn't enough time, and while most of the teachers were willing to answer questions after class, you had only four minutes between between classes. You felt awkward if you asked too many questions. Other kids would accuse you of trying to suck up to the teacher, and surely there were kids who made sucking up their profession. The tension was palpable in the halls, in the lunch room, in the bathrooms and on the stairways. Kids cracked, teachers cracked too. One geometry teacher gave an entire class the square root of 2 as a final grade. A classmate of mine whose father happened to be the student body college advisor - in other words a god - managed to get accepted to Harvard although his grades didn't quite predict such good fortune. His first semester home from the big H for the holidays he jumped out of a twenty-story window rather than tell his father he was failing.

What was I being prepared for back in first grade when my kindly teacher started giving me checks and stars? What strange addiction to someone else's numerical equivalent of my soul was I being hooked onto as a six-year-old? And what was anyone really learning about me by assigning these numbers? What I learned about myself was clear and painful.

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Another perverted lesson that was being taught to me in school was that smart kids seemed invariably to be white.

Nothing David Duke is saying in Louisiana tonight, no racist message he ever delivered to his followers was more subtly or effectively inscribed onto the hearts of children than the message of the tracking system. With the single exception of kindergarten, every grade I attended in public school had attached to it some Orwellian acronym symbolizing genetic superiority. IGC: Intellectually Gifted Children, SP: Special Progress, SPE: Special Progress Enriched, Gifted and Talented. Even if you accept the absurd notion that those kinds of distinctions between kids can be made, how can you explain that in my twelve years of schooling on Manhattan's upper West Side, where ~5 percent of public school kids are non-white, there was never a black or latino in any of my classes. We were taught, without a word ever being said, to fear and despise those kids, and they were taught to loathe themselves and envy us. Tracking continues unabated in schools today. Elite private schools are no better, they just have sharper public relations offices.

But let me pass through my anger and frustration for just a moment now as I believe I was actually invited to speak here tonight about the positive. What events, conditions and people in my life gave me the tools and the strength to recover from the effects of my formal education? (I must be beginning to sound like some crazed member of a new 12-step program: Pupil's Anonymous) But the answer is quite simple: My parents, my friends and my own stubborn streak.

First my parents: I learned from my parents in two ways. By watching them and by their active support. Observation of one's family for the most part is unconscious. You adopt your parents' gestures, the

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way they speak, walk, stand effortlessly. As you get older you come to understand them as people and you them how they measure themselves, what they see as real success and real failure. This often has nothing to do with what your parents actually say to you about what is right and wrong, good and bad, important or insignificant, but rather is developing a sense of who your parents are as whole people.

My father taught me two great lessons - the first, from his strong side, was that I could do anything I wanted to do. And that I enjoy doing it was the important thing. The second, harder lesson from his weak side was that I needed to finish what I started.

My father also read to me and told me stories almost every night of my childhood. Most of what he read and told me were from Roman and Greek history and mythology. What I think that did was leave me with a sense of place and history and gave me a point of departure from which to measure my own time and culture.

My mother taught me how to laugh - perhaps the most important tool of survival anyone can have. She was also the indulgent and overprotective mother that is the curse of every "only" child. But out of this indulgence, she gave me a great gift: my privacy and the time to use it. Looking back over those old report cards, I realized that I stayed home from school on average 25 percent of every school year, a record 52 days during the reign of Mrs. Dynamite. I wasn't a sickly child, I just didn't like going to school, and my mom obliged by writing an excuse whenever I wanted one. I remember spending a lot of time at home reading and playing with toy soldiers.

From my friends I learned how to live life. And amongst my friends I include my teachers, those rare people who found a way to share their knowl-

edge with me. It's magic when it happens, it's invisible, and it's quite natural. There are many fine teachers in the world. They are people who have a graceful and delicate touch, and their gift is given unconditionally. It can be your lover, who with one small whisper uncouples you from your troublesome ego. Or it can be someone like John Gatto who manages to convince you time and again that you are your own best teacher, and that the world can indeed be changed.

Thank you all. I think it's time now for a well-deserved, if brief, break.

Roland Legiardi Laura, beside being one of John Gatto's ex-students, is also a structural engineer, an award-winning filmmaker as well as co-founder of The Poet's Cafe in lower Manhattan - and probably a lot of other creative things I don't know about! As you can tell, he's also a very funny guy, and highly articulate.

BARBARA JILL "B.J." CUMMINGS
Former Student, The Lab School
"Breaking the Rules"

When John asked me to speak, he said it was because he wanted my own experience with both traditional and alternative education, and because of what I made of it, despite the odds.

It was something I had thought of often. I have no doubts in my mind that my first exposure to alternative education with John Gatto played a pivotal role in my awakening of what education could, and should, be for young people growing up in an increasingly complicated and challenging world community.

For years as a student, I went through my own monotonous routine of education as discipline, and education as conformity. In fact, my own deviance from the traditional and "appropriate" role of students resulted in great frustration in my life and alienation from many "educators" in the public school system.

At times this frustration took the form of requests to my family to take me out of school because I was too repressed there; at other times it took the form of increased discipline and academic penalties *against* me.

Regardless of the measures that the traditional educational system took to cope with "deviant" students like myself, the obvious root of the problem lay in the inability of the schools to respond to my insistent demands for real-life experience. And for learning that was relevant to my experiences outside of the school.

Because I have been asked not to expound on a philosophy of "education in general," of which I most

definitely hold strong views, I will relate to you some of my own personal experiences in searching for an education which could help me to understand, and to effectively *influence*, the world in which I found myself growing up, in New York - and, also, in the global community I began to search out as early as I was able.

Speakers tonight have referred to the advantage of "home schooling," to which I was exposed from a very early age, as a complement to my public schooling. My family took an active interest in my learning and exposed me to what were, consciously or unconsciously, fundamentally different philosophies of learning from those that I encountered in school. When studying history I was referred at home to alternative texts, books such as the *People's History of the United States*, which challenged the Columbus-centered view of America with the Native American perspective, for example.

I consider this involvement of my family fortunate, but I would not look to it as the answer to flaws in our education, because the demands on most families are already burdensome. I would look instead to alternative models of institutionalized schooling, which absolutely must be incorporated into public education if we are to meet the challenges of a changing world.

I began early to search for educational experiences which could help me adjust to and affect the society in which I found myself. John Gatto's Lab School, at the time located at Intermediate School 44 on 77th Street, provided my first venture in applying my understanding of the world to practical actions - ranging from making a living to conducting city planning evaluations to beginning the process of critical review of traditional education - which continues here tonight.

For years after leaving the Lab School, I was grateful for my experiences there, while simultaneously cursing John Gatto for making me *unfit* for my necessary return to discipline-oriented traditional schooling.

I attended four years of high school at one of New York's most competitive public education institutions, an experience which prepared me less for living in society than that one year I spent investigating the city at 13 years old. In fact, I nearly did not finish high school because of my frustration over wasting time when there were "things to be done." The way I remember it I stormed out of high school in my last year, vowing never to return. An appeal to the administration from my family made it clear to them that my forced return would result in my institutionalization, for which they would be held responsible. I spent the rest of that year settling into my own home and a full-time job. I only returned at the end of the year for graduation ceremonies (from which I somehow emerged with honors).

Once the required penance time in mandatory education was over, I began searching for educational options that would allow me creative scope in learning. I spent my college years studying in Panama and in Kenya, and working in positions that took me to Australia, Hawaii, and the hidden sectors of my own community. I spent my month in Panama camped in the jungle, studying tamarin monkeys (who were wonderful teachers). My three months in Kenya were spent in a tent on a wild game reserve and traveling to meet with Masai herdsmen. I worked for the government's Fish and Wildlife Department in Hawaii.

I finally settled into a college that made human sense to me while providing rigorous and challenging hurdles to further test my ideas and world views. As a student, I taught, became an academic activist,

and finally secured funding for a senior thesis that took me to the Amazon in Brazil to investigate influences of development projects on local environments and populations. For three months, I traveled through the Amazon by boat, bus and flatbed truck (with a roped bull for company) and spoke with people who were struggling to survive in a country that had essentially forgotten them. This work was the culmination of years of attempting to mesh my academic, philosophical, and activist interests into a life work that I continue to pursue today.

My own successful search for a creative, challenging educational environment, (which I found at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts) was crucial to the life I have today. I recently published my first book, which dealt with the investigation of the Amazon I began in college. In addition to representing the culmination of one stage in my development, this work began an entirely new, and still more enriching phase in my continued search for creative learning.

In Brazil I found new teachers of a type given credence by our educational systems. My teachers were peasant farmers, Indian chiefs, rubber tappers, rural union leaders. Most of them were illiterate, and all of them taught me more in three months than I could have hoped for in all my 16 years of schooling. My most influential teacher, Paiakan Kaiapo - political chief of a Kayapo Indian village - was arrested while I was in Brazil, for attempting to change government policy regarding development of his own lands. I myself was run out of Brazil by government agents for listening to the voices of teachers such as he.

We have still not recognized the value of this type of learning by living. No "system" of education can provide that if it does not include self-learning, creative investigation, and independence, both to

make mistakes and to discover new truths. Our teachers need to be guides to experience, not enforcers of doctrine and discipline and must encourage us to pursue a goal of becoming "citizens of the world," which may be enacted locally or internationally, but must above all be informed, *not* sheltered, and *not* misled.

When I consider the most important lesson I taught myself through my years of searching for an education, it is that it is not only okay, but essential to learn how to BREAK THE RULES. I continue to break the rules. If I ever tire of doing this, at that time I will cease to learn.

B.J. Cummings is an internationally known lecturer on jungle ecology and author of *Dam the River, Damn the People*.

DAVE LEHMAN
The Alternative Community School of Ithaca
The Healthy Side of Exhaustion

Ours is *not* an "exhausted school"! Our school is alive and well, growing and changing. There are two kinds of "exhaustion" here - one is the exhaustion of defeat, discouragement, and despair, of frustrating, unsuccessful, unrewarded efforts; the exhaustion of a totally worn-out building in which little works, where there are holes in the ceiling, broken windows, unrepairable plumbing, and faulty furnaces - indeed exhaustion. Then there is a second kind of "exhaustion" - that deep feeling of satisfaction after the successful completion of a challenge, of a job well done at the end of a full expenditure of one's total energies and commitment; it is the exhaustion of the athlete at the end of the event; it is the feeling at the end of class when you know there was real learning going on! It is this second kind of exhaustion that I feel, and that our staff often feels. So let me tell you something about our school, about the Alternative Community School of Ithaca, New York - a *public* middle school and high school.

In our eighteenth year as a *public school of choice*, we serve the whole School District of Ithaca, which is the most diverse upstate community outside of the big cities of Binghamton, Syracuse, Rochester, and Buffalo. While working with students whose parents are employed at Cornell University and Ithaca College, we also serve a 155 square mile rural population, being the northern most county of Appalachia; and we have an approximately equal representation of students from our school district's 20 percent minority population of Afro-Americans, Asians, Hispanics, Native Americans, and others. In

addition, 10 percent of our students are officially classified as "Learning Disabled or Emotionally Disturbed", and another 15 to 25 percent each year are identified as "PSEN", Pupils with Special Education Needs, being behind in one or more basic skill areas by at least a year. Students freely apply to ACS and are admitted from our waiting list as soon as room becomes available by means of a lottery drawing from our different applicant pools to assure we maintain our diversity. As a public school we are funded at the same basic per pupil cost as the two other middle schools and the central high school in Ithaca. Thus, we are staffed based on the same basic district-wide formula of one full-time teacher equivalent for every 18.65 students. (Those .65 students are the ones that seem hardest to work with, though - they never quite seem to be all there!)

Now, with that quick background about our school district and our student population, let me describe what it is that these students have chosen in coming to ACS, the kinds of reforms and changes that we have made at the Alternative Community School, because I want you to know that schools - indeed *public* schools - *can* be different; they *can* be changed; there *are* other ways of doing school that can be highly successful!! I would highlight *three key features* that make ACS a genuine alternative, a real choice for sixth through twelfth graders in Ithaca.

First, we are a democratically run school, a laboratory in civics where students and staff (and to the degree that their time permits - parents) are directly and regularly involved in the day-to-day decision-making of running our school. For example, some two years ago a proposal came before our weekly All School Town Meeting - which incidentally is run by our student Agenda Committee - that "community service" become a graduation requirement, and our total student body and staff, after

much discussion, overwhelmingly voted their approval for a minimum of 30 hours of community service becoming a new graduation requirement. I suggest that is real shared decision-making, a real sharing of power.

Secondly, we strive to personalize education at ACS, to work with each student holistically, not just with their intellectual abilities and difficulties, but their emotional, social, and physical selves as well; to get to know, to work and play, to laugh and cry with them as total human beings, to take them seriously for who they are. Here we have used our resources to develop an average class size of 16 to foster this kind of personalization and have created "Family Groups" of about 12 students each with one teacher, where that teacher meets at least twice a week with the whole group, serving as their advisor, their advocate, their facilitator of interpersonal growth, and the main contact with their parents.

Thirdly, we have developed a program and a curriculum which has *five major options* by which students may learn, recognizing what works for one student doesn't always work for another. *One*, there are "classes or courses", both for our middle school and our high school students, which meet four times per week, either for a single 45-minute period or for a double period, often interdisciplinary, as in English and social studies for courses in Facing History or Medieval Times. These classes may be for just one nine-week cycle as is typical of our middle school, or semester or year-long in our high school program, and they are more relevant, not from a State syllabus, but developed by the teachers with their students, such as a course last winter on the "Persian Gulf War." *Two*, we have "Extended Project" blocks in our weekly schedule, all Tuesday afternoons and all Thursday mornings to do different kinds of things that work well in longer time blocks of an hour and

15 minutes to three and half hours, such as "Creative Writing" out in the greater Ithaca community, computer programming, ceramics, ice skating, video production, bicycling, or "Outing Challenge", an Outward Bound type of program done cooperatively with staff from our local Youth Bureau. *Three*, is our "Community Studies Program" in which students are placed individually with adults in various businesses, social agencies, or college departments, "learning by doing" either as career exploration experiences or for actual academic credit. For example, a young seventh grade girl who thinks she would like to become a veterinarian has a community placement with a local veterinarian -- and incidentally may learn that she hates the sight of blood and doesn't want to become a vet - certainly less costly than discovering that after the first year of grad school! Or a high school junior learning bookkeeping and accounting for math credit through a cooperative arrangement between one of our math teachers, our Coordinator of Community Studies, and a staff member at a local Credit Union. *Four*, students, even sixth-graders!, have the opportunity to do "Independent Studies", one-on-one with a teacher to explore in depth a subject of keen personal interest. Such studies may result not only in a research paper, but a videotape, or a play, a laboratory or field experiment, a photographic essay, or any one of a number of other ways of demonstrating learning. And, *Five*, our students may complete parts of their educational program by learning at another educational institution in Ithaca, not only Cornell or Ithaca college where some of our high schoolers take courses, but a local ballet studio, a karate center, or our Community School of Music and Art. The *overriding idea* is to find ways of learning that will work for each student. Even within our heterogeneous, non-tracked, non-graded middle school and high school classes or courses, our teach-

ers strive to find different ways of working with the different learning styles of our individual students. And where there are classes which have students who are having particular difficulties, we will add a second teacher, specifically trained to focus on and assist the learning of these students as a support to the subject matter teacher.

But what evidence is there - you ask - that our students are successful? How do we know the changes we have made - the reforms, the different ways of doing things - really work? I offer three indicators of our success: *one*, our waiting list and our growth from a junior high of 60 students to a middle school and high school of 260; *two*, performance of our students even on conventional standardized tests which is comparable or better than their counterparts in Ithaca's other secondary schools; and *three*, our high school graduates - and we have had twelve graduating classes - an average of 85 percent go to colleges across the country either immediately after high school or within three years of their graduation, others become fully employed, and none are on welfare or in prison.

All of this has not gone unnoticed by our local Central Administration and School Board, for they are increasingly interested in what we are doing, as are the teachers and administrators in the other secondary schools in Ithaca as they look to make reforms in their own programs. At the state level, we have just become one of the first group of schools in the New York State Education Department's "Partnership Schools Program" being designed as a major means of supporting the implementation of the Board of Regents approved Commissioner's "New Compact for Learning". And this has come about largely through our involvement nationally as one of approximately 100 schools who are full members of

the "Coalition of Essential Schools", spearheaded by Ted Sizer of Brown University.

But I'm not here just to speak about our school, but to speak about the need for fundamental educational reform in this country and about public schools of choice. Things can be different in public education; our public schools *can* change. Indeed, many schools and communities have already made or begun to make major, fundamental changes. There are relevant, motivating, self-esteem building ways of helping all young people become critical thinking problem-solvers. There are more authentic ways of evaluating learning than outmoded conventional, standardized paper and pencil tests. And, yes, there was a point when I homeschooled my own children for part of one of their elementary years in rural Ohio, and, yes, I did co-found a nonpublic, independent alternative school in rural Texas, at least partly for my own children, again in their elementary years. But supporting such different ways of educating as these were relatively easy for me as a white, middle class, slightly balding, definitely graying male with a PhD. And I do believe in the importance of such opportunities; yet, for the overwhelming majority of our population, it is the public schools which *must* change, and can change, and at least some *are changing*, as evidenced by our school. And in order for public schools of choice, like ACS, to be positive contributors to this desperately-needed change in the schools of *this* city, *this* state, and *this* country, then the following conditions, which are true for our school, *must* be met:

First, there must be real choices among essentially equal schools that are funded by the same per pupil expenditures.

Secondly, there must be real access to all of these schools of choice, which means not only free public transportation to such schools, but real com-

munication to all students and their parents about such choices and the process of admission, communication that is not dependent solely on a written letter sent home.

Thirdly, each school of choice must guarantee a fully diverse student population made up of representatives of all of the minorities within a given school district, from all of the economic sectors of that district, and from students with learning difficulties as well.

Fourthly, there must be real democratic control of such a school of choice by the administration, staff, students, and parents.

For as important as it is that our schools become more humane places, reorganized, and with major changes in their curricula, textbooks, teaching philosophies and methodologies, and with more direct involvement and even direct control by those being served by our schools, changes such as those I've described about ACS - the most fundamental change that also must occur, and *occur now*, is the elimination of our dual system of "separate and unequal" education. There *must* be a more equitable redistribution of funds to level the playing field of education. And this will not be brought about by treating schools as competing businesses, for the free-market dynamics will not work to correct these inequities and injustices found particularly in our urban and rural schools, rather they will work to deepen these divisions even more. Although money, or the lack of money, is a major factor in this inequity, making money available to foster even more the existing private and parochial school choices, will only serve to weaken our public schools at the very moment when they show the greatest signs and potential for real change. Businesses can, however, increasingly be helpful in providing "mini-apprentice-ships", career explorations, and other "learning

by doing" experiences as in our ACS Community Studies programs. They can be helpful in making it easy for their employees to have release time to attend conferences at school with their youngsters' teachers, and by providing funding to equalize the quality of education and the physical facilities of all our schools.

For things can be done; and you and I must, I say must, do them! It is for all the children of this nation and for their futures - we can do no less. It is toward *this* end that we must exhaust all of our efforts, particularly in a democracy, in a land still waiting for "liberty and justice for all."

Since 1974, Dave Lehman has been the principal of the award-winning Alternative Community High School, a public alternative school in Ithaca, New York. Along with his wife Judy, Dave has brought that school into its present status of honor and success through deep understanding and concern for the human condition and the plight of the young, as well as a superbly balanced sense of truly democratic institutional learning. Dave has been a minister, a Peace Corps worker, a research educationist, and Lord knows what else - and is a frequent contributor to ΣΚΟΑΕ.

JAMAAL M. WATSON
Student, The Lab School
"My Life As a Troublemaker"

Welcome to the second half of our program... My name is Jamaal Watson... and together with my buddy Victor, I'm the creator of "Elvis Impersonator"... If you went to our school records you might find us listed as "troublemakers"... and "below average" in many subjects... And if you went around the whole country you would find millions of kids set down in secret records the same way...

Why do schools do that?... What's it supposed to mean?... Do the words "troublemaker" and "below average" tell you anything useful?... Earlier this year Senator Bob Kerry of Nebraska asked Victor and me to breakfast at the Algonquin Hotel... He listened to our analysis of what's wrong with schools for three hours... No school official or school reformer ever asked our opinion on anything before... but I understand Senator Kerry is running for President... does the time he spent with us troublemakers reflect badly on *him*, or does it reflect badly on schoolpeople?...

Let me tell you a few other things about Victor and myself that schools don't know... and wouldn't care about if they did... together we talked Annie Nocente, the great Marvel comic book creator, into a personal apprenticeship... each week we snuck out of school to her studio for private lessons in storytelling... (Mr. Gatto covered for us)... Victor was written about in *The Christian Science Monitor*... I won three citywide essay contests and got a job as a consultant... paying $15 an hour... Victor and I visited 20 different engineering companies to watch how they did their work... You won't find *that* in our

school records, but you may find us called "troublemakers!"... Victor and I took a second day off each week to go to the public library by ourselves... I think we learned as much there as we did in all eight years of school put together... Yes, we had to sneak out to do it... yes, Mr. Gatto covered for us again... I think he must have trusted us to use the time wisely... schools aren't supposed to do that, of course.

What kind of business is hated by its customers... and dislikes its customers in return?... Only one... it's called "school"... Take a walk to your local school and look at it closely - who would put a kid in such a place and ring bells in his ears if they liked him?... Have you ever noticed how few adult people ever talk about their own school days or even remember them? Shouldn't 12 years make more memories... if they were good years?....

Here to tell you more about why the school idea is worn out... is my friend and eighth grade teacher... John Taylor Gatto, New York State Teacher of the Year for 1991...

JOHN TAYLOR GATTO
The Problem of Schooling

Experts have consistently misdiagnosed and misdefined the problem of schooling to serve their own pocketbooks. The difficulty is not that children don't learn to read, write and do arithmetic very well - it is that kids don't learn at all the way schools insist on teaching.

When we strip children of a primary experience base - as confinement schooling must do to justify its very existence -we destroy the natural sequences of learning which always put experience first. Only much later, after a bath of experience, can the thin gruel of abstraction mean anything. We haven't forgotten this, but there is just not much profit in it for the people and the businesses who make their bread and butter from monopoly schooling. Indeed, you can't hire people who can handle primary data well as teachers because there are so many other things they can do - that's why science teachers are seldom scientists and other teaching "specialists" are seldom very good practitioners of what they presumably "teach".

The call you hear all around for a longer school year is only a mask over the endless longing of the school institution for a guaranteed clientele; in times like these, when money isn't forthcoming, then perhaps people can be frightened into handing it over. I've just given you a better way to understand why you hear so often about the wonders of Japanese schooling, twelve weeks longer than our own. You are being asked to believe that more is better at the very instant that Hong Kong, with a school year ten weeks *shorter* than Japan's, whips that nation in every single academic category measured. In New York

City we hear with reasonable frequency that Israel's long school term confirms the lesson of Japan since both nations trounce U.S. student competition handily. But during this whole gruesome exercise in manipulating our national mind to prepare it for *more* schoolteaching (in spite of its hideous track record) I have yet to hear *once* how handily Flemish Belgium trounces Israel in every academic category - even though it has a school year *eleven weeks shorter than Israel's* and *nineteen* weeks shorter than Hong Kong's.

Have you heard these things before? Is it possible someone would rather you didn't? Perhaps you can think of some convincing explanation why we fail to hear of the victories of nations with short school years in the current stampede toward a longer one here.

If you would think clearly, first guard the integrity of your mind against the myths of schoolmen. The most important thing you need to know about the school hierarchy in New York City - and "official" reform initiatives endorsed by New York teacher-colleges like Columbia's, Bank Street's and Fordham's, and those of invisible 501c3 entities like "The Center for Educational Innovation" - is that they maintain a school empire of over 30,000 administrative jobs, visible ones and covert ones. Seventy-five cents of every school dollar goes for administrative costs. The Catholic Church oversees a million kids in parochial school with about 1/60th the number of administrative jobs New York schools have - indeed they have more administrators than every nation in western Europe combined.

Why don't you know that? Is it possible someone would rather you didn't?

Look at the disgrace these 30,000 experts have brought down on this city. Their existence bankrupts the middle class. Look at the nightmare

world they have inflicted on our children. My own school district, a wealthy place located mainly between Columbia University and Lincoln Center, was declared in 1989 the worst single school district in New York State - out of more than 700 "competitors." Worst in reading, worst in math, worst in many other things. Community School District 3, which no more serves the "community" than its version of "public" education serves the public, has, on its northern boundary, Columbia University, just south of that sits the world famous Bank Street College of Education, and on its southern boundary rests Fordham University.

In my 26 years of teaching, none of these fine and arrogant institutions, none of the king's ransom in tax dollars spent by the school district, and none of the feverish rhetoric of the West Side's loud and arrogant political establishment, none of this massed wealth and wisdom has done one tiny bit to alter the nightmare destiny of the children whose minds are put to death in District 3 schools.

Come to a school board meeting in District 3 and you will find the school board and superintendent congratulating each other about the good job they have done. A spectacle I believe is repeated everywhere that monopoly schooling flourishes.

Enough. Enough. Enough. There will *be* no reform in these schools without competition. Any promise of change from within is an illusion. Government schools are a jobs project, one that hires two people for every one and a quarter needed. Government schools are the single largest form of political patronage everywhere, their sweetheart contracts with bus companies, builders, booksellers and other profiteers are legendary - in school purchasing there are no economies of scale. With their no-show, low-show jobs, their favors for insiders, and all the rest they are corrupt places, and they are

corrupting of the precious time of children. Time to declare the monopoly irrelevant.

Government schools must be made to compete for tax dollars with *every* other form of schooling, old and new. Let parents and communities *choose* what kind of education they will buy. Trust the customers, they will correct our school problem with the power of the purse string. Time to end the Soviet system of government compulsion schools that disgraces our nation and ruins our children. We need tax credits, vouchers, and some more sophisticated ways to develop thousands of entrepreneurial schools. Down in Knoxville, Tennessee, a young man named Chris Wittle is gambling 60 million dollars of his own money to come up with a new design for schooling. I've met him; I think he's going to succeed. We'll all be better for his success because it will stimulate others to try their own designs.

There is no one right way to grow up. Locked up in the minds and hearts of people everywhere are hundreds of good designs - just waiting for the incentive of free market competition, and perhaps a little underwriting at the beginning, to burst forth.

But so far the State Departments of Education, and the materials suppliers who love their sweetheart deals, and the institutes and foundations and other special interests who make a living out of school business as usual, have stopped this natural return to the successful free market in schooling that the U.S. once enjoyed.

My instincts tell me the school establishment thinks they are going to get away with it again. That's why I rented Carnegie Hall - to ask people to help me force the politicians to put school choice legislation on the ballot. Once we succeed in forcing that, the handwriting will be on the wall. And like insects exposed when a rock is lifted the 30,000 administrators will scurry to and from vainly trying to pro-

tect their privileges. Perhaps I won't live to see that end, but I want my granddaughter Mossie to see it.

I asked you earlier not to be fooled any longer by calls for a longer school year, now let me warn you against being fooled that your kids will miss anything important by scrapping this monopoly for free market choice schools. Schoolmen will tell you we need these places to take care of the poor, but the Gallup Poll will tell you it is the poorest among us who scream most loudly for choice.

Schoolmen will have you believe that no one can learn without these places even though literacy was higher in the United States *before* we built the factory school system.

Schoolmen will tell you that we can't enter the technological future without mass compulsion schooling but the tremendous computer revolution which made 45 million of us computer literate over the past 20 years owes nothing whatever to formal schooling! People taught themselves by reading instructions, watching others, begging for advice, by experimentation, by trial and error, by tuning into networks, by buying lessons from thousands of little entrepreneurs. *That's* how we learned to be computer literate - schools had nothing to do with it at all! I have a personal story to tell here - for the past 15 years I've watched a New Jersey hairdresser, a mother with young children to raise, turn herself into a high-powered executive of a freight consolidation company doing business from coast to coast. Judy Kovach, the lady this evening is dedicated to, didn't have an MBA and spent her evenings dancing instead of reading *The Wall Street Journal*. But by force of will and hard work, and by dint of a good attitude that made her a lifelong learner, she became superb at a tough, demanding job - and rose to the #2 spot in a national company, by merit. School had

nothing to do with Judy's success, although self-education had everything to do with it.

The owner of McGraw-Hill/Macmillan, a leading textbook publisher, and the owner of Berlitz, the world's premier language schools, was, himself, a grade school dropout. Is there, perhaps, a lesson in these stories? Would his products and services have been less appealing if his private history had been known?

What we have most to fear is this: that school in the year 2090 will be exactly like school in the year 1990. As school in 1990 was exactly like school in 1890 except for cosmetic differences. But a century earlier, in 1790, it was still possible to get an education in the U.S. One dramatic evidence of that was that Tom Paine's *Common Sense* sold 600,000 copies in that year to a population of two and a quarter million, three-quarters of it slaves and indentured servants. Almost nobody has the *skill* to read *Common Sense* today, even though its language is simple and powerful.

In 1790 school didn't preempt all the time of the young in endless abstractions, nor did it act as the major destabilizer of family life then, nor did it disseminate a river of halftruths and state-approved myths so that its clientele were turned servile and mindless.

School in 1790 didn't drive children insane as it does today. Alexis deTocqueville said in 1831 that the common people of America were the best educated in the history of the world. That was before we had a government monopoly in schooling - does anyone think he'd say that again?

Whether it's going to be possible to get an education in the schools of the year 2000 will depend on political decisions made by those who hold power in trust for all of us. Or it will depend on the defiant personal decisions of simple people like you and me.

Like the quiet revolution that caused 600,000 American families to school their children at home, up from 10,000 families a decade ago.

Our system of government schooling destroys both mind and character. It prevents the formation of the most precious resource of all - a self. To have a self you can trust it must be singular, it must be bold, it must be brave, resourceful, strong, self-reliant, unfettered. Does anyone in this audience think government schools teach these things? If you do you must be crazy. Perhaps you should teach in these places as I did for 26 years so you could know them inside out.

A school which educates cannot be a wall compound. It cannot employ a permanent priesthood certified as politically correct by the State and its economic partners like the teacher colleges.

Why is Community School District 3 so very bad if it contains both a wealthy population - and Columbia Teachers College, the world famous Bank Street College, and Fordham University School of Education inside its boundaries? The utter bankruptcy of teacher college education is found in the record of Community School District 3 over the past 23 years under Decentralization. Ask the colleges why this collection of schools is so bad. Listen carefully as they answer. Watch their eyes.

With the end of mass-compulsion schooling, corrupt relationships with universities peddling teacher credits, with publishers peddling useless texts, with building contractors (who are among the major supports of government schooling), and with other profiteers who thrive on a mass captive audience will cease.

The new school, if it happens, will eliminate testing as we know it because it does massive and permanent damage to children without producing any information of value - or even reliability. Testing

as we have it is another profitable racket - ranking children through abstract measures with no verifiable connection to character traits we hope to cultivate in children - or any connection with developing mental powers. It is a rigged game and the testing industry is a gangster industry, which, through number magic, justified managing our citizenry as ancient Egypt managed its own - as if they distribute along a pyramidal hierarchy. They don't, that is what I've learned in 26 years of teaching rich and poor. And paper and pencil testing has no other use, it is a poor predictor of anything real.

The most disturbing instance of the testing racket is the multi-billion dollar reading remediation program. To learn to read fluently takes about 30 contact hours. It is a fairly easy skill for anyone to pick up, and millions know how to read *before* they go to school, having picked it up on their own.

Indeed, the only way to stop a child from reading and liking it in a literate environment is to teach it the way we teach it. But the industry of reading and its pseudo-scientific scare tactics is the most effective way to intimidate parents and taxpayers to stay in line, so you are discouraged from finding out just how easy it is.

So far, our new school has dropped walled compounds - its exercises occur everywhere: in offices, museums, companies, on farms, ships, in private homes, in churches, and in other rooms of a thousand types.

Our new school has decertified schoolteaching also, so that anyone with a skill to transmit can easily be put in touch with those who want the service. We have the technology to do this right now, all we lack is the will to deconstruct the empire of bad government schools we have erected over our children.

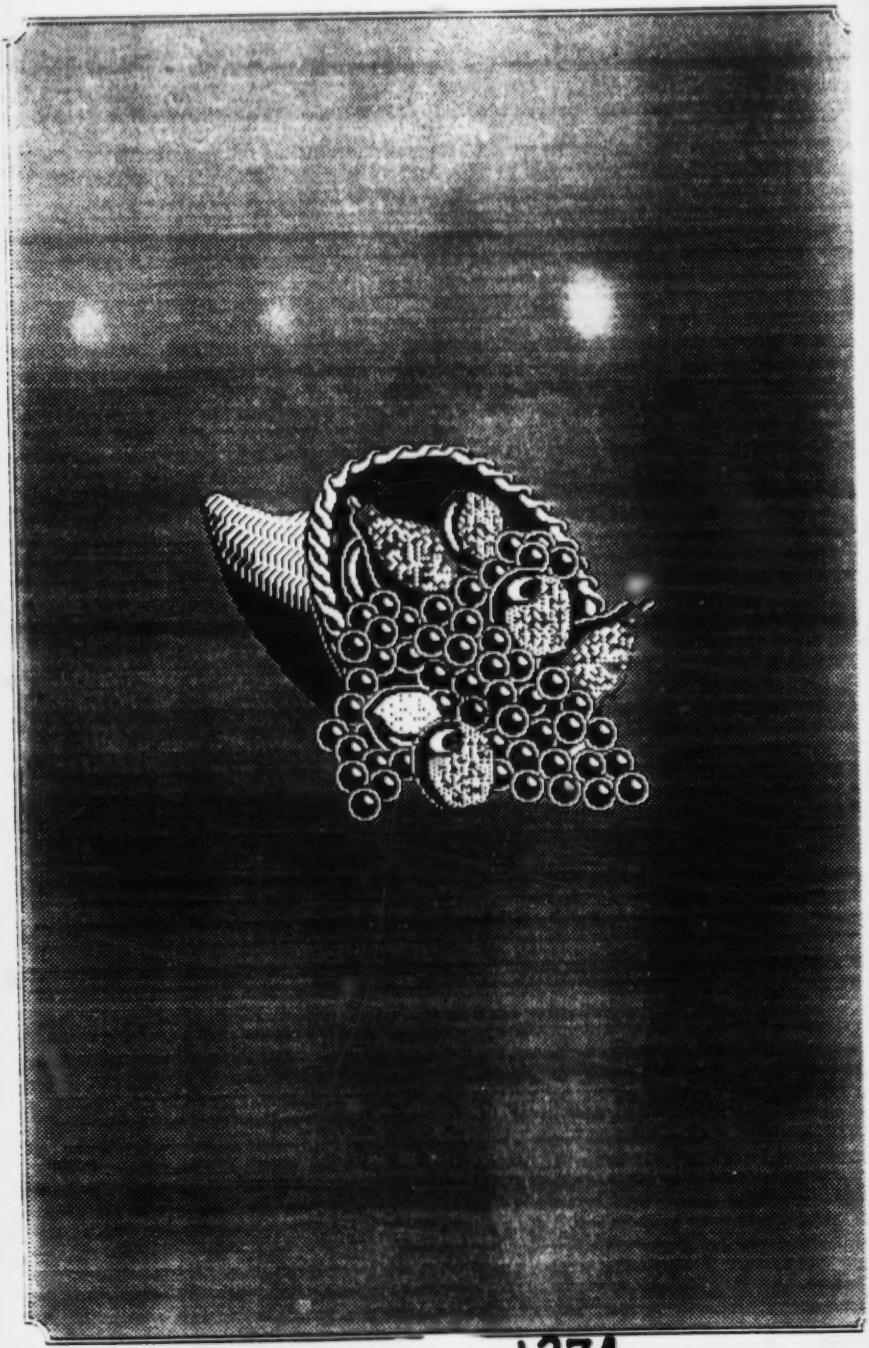
And most important of all, our new school has to put the money to purchase educational services

back into the hands of taxpayers. It trusts itself to be able to win favor - and if it guesses wrong, it will have the decency to close up shop and go away. Government schools will compete with the others, but to win they will have to earn it. That would be a revolutionary change, wouldn't it?

The new school has flex-time, flex-space, flex curriculum, and flex-sequencing, because the range of human variety *demands* that; it has eliminated standardized testing - not because we don't need standards, we do - because standardization is the best way to assure the lowest possible quality of performance.

Time to stop the dishonesty. All of us are sickened by it, even those who *think* they profit by this system. We are dying as a nation and becoming a State. A nation is run by neighbors, but a state is run by experts. Monopoly schooling is a poison killing our nation. Don't look to schools for your salvation, *they have no idea what to do.* Look to your own courage, look to your own wits, look to your strong right arms. Demand free-market choice schools, help us get a school choice bill before the State legislatures.

Trust yourselves, trust the people, trust the kids. God bless you all in the struggle ahead.



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